

MADE IN CHINA



MADE IN CHINA

The Story of China's Expression

CORNELIA SPENCER

Author of "Three Sisters"

FOREWORD BY LIN YUTANG

ILLUSTRATED BY

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AND WITH EIGHT PLATES IN COLOUR



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FOREWORD

by Lin Yutang

THE title of this book at first sight seems misleading, and yet on second thought it isn't. The blatantly commercial suggestion of anything "made in China" or in any other country doesn't hold water. Before the modern age of international intercourse one used to see the things made in foreign countries without having a chance of seeing the people of that country. One had to make conjectures about the people who made the things. This was true of the ancient Romans when they saw Chinese silk, and it is true to-day of a great many Chinese inland who see Western cameras or aeroplanes, but have never seen Westerners. We inevitably connect the things made and the human spirit that made them, and proceed from knowledge to wonder.

There was no question that China created an extraordinary impression on the people of ancient and medieval Europe by being known through three things, all distinguished by their delicacy, beauty, and smoothness to the touch. Europe knew China first through her silk—that delicate, strong, imperishable material that still cannot be surpassed to-day. Then China was known through her jade, with its silken finish. Finally, she was known through her porcelain, with a jade-like lustre and purity. Only in the nineteenth century did the West discover some other aspects—her lack of sanitation and her poverty. Yet the question raised by her first three creations is worth examining again. How was it that China happened to create and develop and perfect the three things that the hand liked to feel? Was it an accident?

The author has approached this subject from the only sensible point of view, by presenting always the things made in the light of the human spirit that created them. She has invested what might be a catalogue of manufacturing processes with the spirit of familiar understanding. Still sticking to her theme of the Chinese creative spirit, she has allowed herself to treat, intelligently and beautifully, among the things "made in China," such articles as poetry, drama, painting, sculpture, and medicine. The result is shockingly uncommercial. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Commerce would be totally disappointed if it took a look

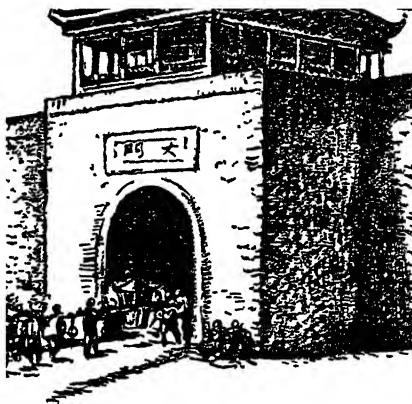
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at this book with the idea of finding out what line or lines of saleable goods it should develop for export after the war.

The book covers a wide range of subjects from Chinese gardens to Chinese dragons, from the making of Chinese paper and ink, and the invention of Chinese printing to the various uses of bamboo and 'paper magic.' The chapters on Chinese medicine, paper and printing, the 'wonder bean,' and silk contain some astounding information for the average reader. Written in a popular, lively style, it is nevertheless a wonderful compendium of a number of facts little known to the West, and has entailed more painstaking research than perhaps the average reader would realize.

The Western public is in present need of exactly a book like this, with hundreds of little facts that the people are beginning to ask about China. And the author has always ably answered the question, not of what is the material of Chinese industry, but of what they did with such humble material, like clay and bamboo and paper and the common writing-brush. The reader will, I am sure, come to the conclusion that, although the Chinese discovered, a millennium before Christ, such valuable materials as lacquer and bronze and jade and silk and later the magnet, paper, and gunpowder, their genius seems to be at its best when it has nothing to work with. In this connexion I think the story, at the end, of the overturned truck is one of the best stories I have ever read, showing how this nation has survived so long.

Some of the facts, of course, touch on controversial topics, just like the question of the origins of things and customs in the West. I take this opportunity to disagree with the author and present my favourite theory that the dragon is nothing but a romanticized crocodile. In other words, it belongs to the family of lizards. Except for the whiskers and the horns, it is an unmitigated crocodile. Its habitat is water. It has the crocodile's claws. Above all, the wavy line of its jaws, as seen in Chinese pictures, is exactly like the jaw-line of the crocodile. It appears in times of flood and is rarely seen and therefore mysterious. I emphatically deny that it has the "head of a camel." If the lobes on its forehead are well developed it is because the dragon thinks. He is an idealist.



PREFACE

WHEN men of the West first saw the shining beauty of silk, and smelled the fragrance of spices, and tasted the curious pungency of tea, and held in their hands the porcelains of the T'ang Dynasty, they began to search for a way to the Orient.

Greeks and Romans and Arabs, travelling by tedious overland routes, reached India and Burma and there bought precious things of the traders from Cathay. The Polos spent years in the court of the great Kublai Khan and brought back what seemed fairy tales of beauty. Columbus, determined to find a sea route by sailing west rather than east, failed, but found a new world instead. Magellan reached the Spice Islands but went no farther, as he died there. Portuguese adventurers pressed their way into the islands and from there tried to reach the mainland.

Thus began the steady, unending effort of men from Europe—and later from America as well—to enter the mysterious East, so as to learn there the secrets none but it knew.

Centuries have passed since then. China has slowly opened her doors, giving and taking. But even yet there is magic in the things of China, for China is a land of artists—artists who use the very soil they till to produce pottery and porcelain; who toil untiringly with the insignificant silkworm to weave from its invisible thread the fabrics upon which the world depends; whose very writing is itself an art; whose words

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express the most profound truth and sensitive wisdom; who can make something from nothing and have that something beautiful; who can lose bitterly and not be beaten. They are artists, and the artist's soul can never stop interpreting and dreaming and creating.

To know that a thing is from China is to feel the spell which began two thousand years ago; the spell that will continue to exist as long as there are Chinese, for it is born of their nature.

Stories and legends have gathered round the origins of many articles used in modern life. China is not given credit for some things which first came from that great country, while she is assumed to have invented others to which she has no claim. Such legends began when the traders unpacked their cases and word was passed from mouth to mouth. Names were often twisted and exchanged, and oftentimes geography, never too clear, was turned about.

This book, then, because of certain facts of research, will be found to differ in some points with general belief. In other ways it will add to the already magnificent store of the gifts of China to the world. Some crafts not begun in China will be found here, too, because her development of them was so significant that they came to express her more fully than their originators.

Nothing but a work made up of many volumes could begin to deal exhaustively with the origin and development of Chinese arts and handicrafts.

This simple book is but to introduce the average reader to what China has given the world. Perhaps it will serve to whet his appetite to go further in his research; perhaps it will do no more than make him see with keener, more appreciative eyes, the value of the things the Chinese value—beauty, wisdom, and democracy.

If it accomplishes this it will have served its purpose.



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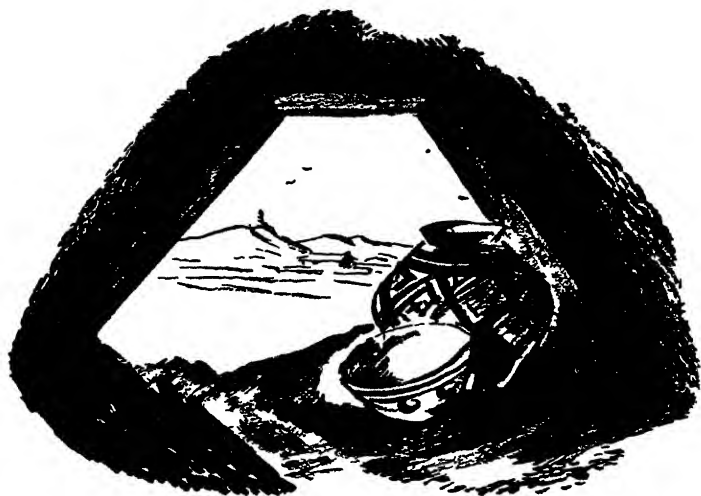
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CHINESE POTTERY TWO THOUSAND YEARS OLD

By courtesy of Compt n's, "Putner Encyclopedia"



CHINA'S EARLIEST EXPRESSION

Pottery

THE oldest story of man is the story of his struggle to live. He had to fight his enemies, protect himself against wild beasts, shelter his young against cold and tempest; find food and store it for the days when it could not be obtained.

The beginnings of man's expression of thoughts and feelings are told, not in one part of the world alone, but in many. Man learned to speak in many different ways. He could hew rocks so that they had meanings. He could notch sticks to record the suns or moons of his life and the lives of his family. He took clay, shaped it to make a bowl, and let it dry in the sunshine. Later, when he had finished the shaping, he took a sharp stick and drew lines, crossing them in simple geometric design. He had said something. It was there in the clay. It meant, "Thus, man likes. This is beauty."

When lightning, then flint-rocks, then friction of sticks taught man about fire, he discovered by accident that clay left in heat became hard and took on new colours. What he made and what he said could now be lasting.

So, four thousand years ago, perhaps even longer, man discovered art. He began to express his thoughts and feelings for his own people.

China's Earliest Expression

Centuries passed, and as these thoughts grew and became clearer man set out to discover his world, and the mingling of cultures began.

Thus the early men of China, and other men in their parts of the world, began to speak. Their feelings and their facts, but especially their facts, must be recorded imperishably. Men to come must know of the men who had gone before. Records of rulers and great men must not be lost. Charms and oracles must not be forgotten. The place of safest keeping was in the tombs of the dead. From generation to generation these were guarded, protected, and honoured. The natural place of sacrifice was where the dead were laid to rest. Here was the doorway to the Unknown. Gifts for the dead must be things of beauty.

Nothing was more permanent than bone and shell and ivory, which did not decay when buried in the ground. Bamboo, too, dried to great hardness. From references in old histories we know that writing was early done on slabs of bamboo called bamboo slips. So on all these permanent materials the men of China wrote the records of history, which future generations would read.

It is not known exactly when or how writing began in China. Some say the earliest recorded words were knotted cords and that the first characters were pictures of these. Some say writing began with pictograms, some of which can still be seen in the writing of China to-day. The earliest records, cut in bone, are lists of those to whom sacrifices were to be made. Entire ancestral lines can be traced through these lists. The names of rulers and their wives are given.

But the development of words and the expression of beauty went on together. Men discovered that bowls were more perfect when shaped on a revolving stone; then on a crude potter's wheel. They found that clay was impure and rough unless covered with a surface of something smooth and glistening. This led to the discovery of a shining black substance. The Chinese who coated their bowls and jugs with it were known as the Black Pottery People.

Whatever the Black Pottery People of China made, they made perfectly. They polished their bowls beautifully and conceived of decorations which even yet are like no others. They were the earliest group of this part of the world whose civilization is clearly recorded in what they left behind. For superb ceremonial urns have been found in tombs. We know that these people who made them must have known something of spinning, for with the urns were found stone spinning whorls; that they had learned to till the soil, because we have their



THE PAINTED POTTERY PEOPLE ADDED COLOUR

China's Earliest Expression

agricultural instruments; that they hunted, because there are their arrows and spears. They made steaming pots and tripods in which to cook their food. They knew how to use chisels and adzes. Men in other parts of the world were discovering many of these things, too.

In 1920 Professor J. G. Andersson, the geologist, digging in provinces of Northern China and in Southern Manchuria, found jugs made of washed, sifted clay which was free of vegetable matter and stones. Quartzite and flinty material had been added to make it strong. Men had found that clay from different places baked to different shades. They had learned to use this phenomenon of colour and had brushed on designs of varying clay wash.

These men, the Painted Pottery People, used black and brown on a background of red or grey; they made spirals and coils and wave-like patterns or drew straight geometric designs and worked them into curves with snakeskin effects. They were gay pictures, brilliant with the quality of great art, delighting those who, even now, gaze on them in museums in Paris and Stockholm. To the form and design that the Black Pottery People used, the Painted Pottery People added colour.

Then, in a little village of North Honan, near what was thought to be the old capital of the first recorded dynasty of Chinese history, pottery masks of monsters called *t'ao-t'ieh* were dug up. These are faces with gaping mouths and bristling fangs. They seem to reflect the terror of the Unseen which must have filled men's minds at that time. These masks are man's expression of this fear. China was in her feudal period, when there was no safety nor security. The imagination conjured up demons and monsters, creatures of the spirit world which controlled this physical living.

China has now reached the threshold of recorded history. Life meant more than the mere struggle for existence. There was an art that knew form and colour and now representation. China's contribution to the world had begun. Three thousand years later, on leaving China, Marco Polo was to say of a city in the South, the Zaitun of his time:

Let me tell you that in this province . . . they make porcelain of all sizes, the finest that can be imagined . . . and thence it is exported all over the world. Here it is abundant and cheap, insomuch that for a Venetian groat you can buy three dishes so fine that you could not imagine better.



THE LEGEND OF SI LING

Silk

WHILE the Chinese recorded their history on bones and inscribed signs of fortune-telling on shell, while from clay they shaped vessels of amazing beauty for ordinary use as well as for sacrifice, a tiny worm began a new drama which was to open the first road leading from the East to the West. It not only brought a new art but contributed greatly to the old art of pottery, for from the designs of silken brocades and tapestries was to come the perfection of porcelain beauty that for centuries was China's greatest contribution to the artistic expression of the world.

The secretion of the larva of the *Bombyx mori*, the silkworm moth, did more than create a fabric which appealed to the sense of exotic beauty of man. It started men on the long trail that led from the valley of the great Yangtze river, northward and westward through Turkestan, to India and Russia, and in time to the very Mediterranean itself. The Silk Road is the oldest trade route of China, and the most famous. Pottery, hard to transport, had to wait for the long journey by sea, but silk—fine, unbreakable, imperishable, compact, priceless—could go by caravan. Coming to the hands of those who looked at it with wonder, it stirred them with longing, even as many years later the spices from the islands to the south of China were to whet the appetites of men

The Legend of Si Ling

like Magellan. Men of Europe, seeing the silk, and feeling it, and letting it flow through their fingers, wanted it. But how it was made was a Chinese secret and one that was kept by them for many centuries.

There are many legends about the origin of silk. One claims that silk is named after Si Ling, chief wife of the half-mythical Yellow Emperor, Huang Ti, said to be ruler about the time of the Black Pottery People. One day the Empress, who was watching the sun shine on the mulberry-trees of her garden in the old southern capital, Hangchow, saw a tiny caterpillar carefully weaving a cocoon of fine thread drawn from its body. If the caterpillar clothed itself with such beauty, could not man, too, make use of the thread, more glistening and fine than any yet known? She must have more mulberry-trees. She must gather the eggs of the yellow and white moths. She must find a way of winding the threads on her distaff, and then weave them into a cloth.

And so Si Ling is said to have invented the loom and to have begun the production of silk for man's use. Records were written on silk and pictures were painted on it. Emperor and Empress were clothed in it. Silk was to make Sunday dresses for Puritans, stockings for lords and ladies, invisible hose for Western women, parachutes for airmen, and paper money for America. And it all began with Si Ling!

There is still another story that the Chinese people like to tell about Si Ling and how she came to be the originator of silk. They say that Si Ling was the daughter of a man who was kidnapped by neighbours. In despair, Si Ling's mother promised that she would give her daughter to the one who rescued the captive. As soon as she had said this, her husband's horse grew restive, broke away and vanished. In a few days he returned with his master on his back. The old man was angry when his wife told him of her promise and said that of course it could only apply to humans. But the horse stamped and reared, refused all food and became such a nuisance that his master killed him and hung his hide in the court to dry. As Si Ling passed through the court, the hide instantly flew down, enveloped her, and disappeared with her into the sky. For ten days the father and mother searched for their lost daughter. Finally they found the hide hanging under a mulberry-tree and Si Ling, changed into a silkworm, busily spinning the thread. The parents grieved for their lost daughter, until one night in a dream they saw Si Ling again, this time riding on a charger. She was now a princess



THEY SAW SI LING RIDING ON A CHARGER

The Legend of Si Ling

in heaven, she told them. Because of this legend the patroness of silkworms is called the Horse Head Lady and is often painted with a horse-hide thrown over her head.

The culture of silkworms spread all over China, wherever the mulberry-trees upon which the worms must feed could be grown. In Hangchow the trees were planted in every empty space. The city became famous for silk materials and silk embroidery, and Si Ling, the Goddess of Silkworms, was worshipped every year when the mulberry leaves unfolded, even by the Emperor himself in Peking, the Northern Capital.

For two thousand years the Chinese made silk and sold it to their neighbours, the Koreans, the Japanese, and the Indians. But though all China knew its source, no one gave the secret away.

When, about the year 330 B.C., Alexander the Great led his victorious army through Asia Minor to India he carried back to the Mediterranean the first silk that Europe had ever seen. But the secret of its making was still safe in China.

It was not until three hundred years after Christ, with the capture of four Chinese girls by Japanese pirates, that the secret reached Japan. About the same time an Indian prince married a Chinese princess. She carried some of the eggs in her head-dress and so spread the source of silk to India.

But in Europe, although the demand for silk grew more and more urgent, no one could produce it and all that was used came by caravan over the long Silk Road. In the second century Graeco-Romans learned of China as Ser, or Seres, from which came the adjective Serika or Serik. Because silk came from China they came naturally to call it the cloth of Ser and so gradually, silk. The Silk Road by which it reached them led northward and westward.

At last, in Justinian's reign, two Persian monks who had lived a long time in China and had learned there the art of silk-making, returned and told what they knew. The Emperor asked them to go back and bring some of the silkworms' eggs. It was a long way and they had to work cautiously, for if their intention became known their lives might be forfeited. After a great time they came back with the eggs hidden in their hollow bamboo pilgrims' staffs. And so the production of silk began in the western world and persisted there for the next twelve hundred years.

The knowledge of silk-making spread from Constantinople. The

Silk

Saracens carried it with them as they conquered lands of the East and of the West. Sicily and Florence and Milan and Venice and Genoa all began to produce it. England, too, tried to raise the worm but failed, perhaps because the climate was too cold. Young America experimented with special mulberry trees but in time she, like England, had to import raw silk for her silk industry.

Silk can be produced successfully only where the climate is favourable for several crops of worms each year, and, because of the painstaking hand work required, where labour is very cheap. China, Japan, India, France, Italy, Persia, and Turkey produce it satisfactorily.

To the Chinese the raising of the silkworms from the minute eggs until the silk itself is reeled and tied for shipment, is more than the making of a product of trade. In winter, when it is time to warm the eggs and bring them to hatching so that the baby worms will be ready for the new mulberry leaves, grandmothers and children, people in a million households, carefully guard the sheets of paper upon which the eggs are laid, sometimes wearing them on their bodies between the layers of clothing, to keep them at proper temperature. It is the beginning of spring, and life is coming into being. The sheets are handled tenderly. When the worms emerge, black and wriggling, they are counted and watched and talked about among the housewives. Small, fresh leaves have to be shredded with scissors, old ones removed, and the worms fed at regular intervals, days and night. It takes from four to six weeks of incessant care to bring the worms to maturity. They eat more and more ravenously, with a sound easily heard in a quiet room. At last, when they are about two and a half inches long and have turned to a transparent grey-white colour, they are ready to spin. Little brush-like bunches of straw or twigs are laid near them, and they crawl heavily to a perch that suits them, to begin their work.

On each side of their bodies are glands from which they spin a double thread sent out through a single spinneret on the under-lip. Two other glands, the glands of Filippi, produce a glue-like substance which helps the threads through the spinneret and makes them adhere into a single strand. Once the silk is touched by the air it hardens into a tough fibre. One worm may spin a thread a thousand yards long. It spins with a swaying, figure-eight motion, completely encasing its body.

In three or four days the cocoon is finished. It is a small oval body about the size of a pigeon's egg, yellow or white. In ten or twelve days

The Legend of Si Ling

the life of the pupa is over and the moth is ready to moisten one end of the cocoon and escape. This must not happen or the thread will be cut and ruined. Before the moth matures the pupa is killed by heat, boiling water, or oven heat, and the silk is wound off.

The winding of the silk from the cocoon is painstaking work. The rough outside silk is not good and must first be taken away. Then the end of the thread must be found and the good silk wound. Usually several cocoons are unwound at one time and the thread is collected on a reel. This is the raw silk. Although China and Japan produce about 85 per cent. of the world's silk, they manufacture only enough for their own use and ship the rest in this crude form.

But not all cocoons may be killed for their silk. The process has gone on for centuries, and it must go on still. The best cocoons are always kept for maturing and mating. The small moths emerge, couple almost at once, and the female lays four or five hundred eggs before she dies—the cycle completed.

Silk is manufactured in many ways, sometimes weighted with metals as in America and England, or unweighted, as in China, where it is fine and durable. Woven and used in China, it holds a magic quality, for the work of many hands goes into its final, perfect beauty—child's and grandmother's for its first creation, woman's for its reeling and dyeing, artisan's for its weaving into satins and brocades and tapestries, artist's for its embroidering. It may depict a blaze of peonies, a spray of winter plum blossoms, or West Lake at Hangchow—the city of its origin—green, with drooping willows reflected in the lake beside a moon-arched bridge. It is the artisan, perhaps the artist, who should be revered, for the designs which he so long ago conceived and wove into China's silk are the designs reproduced in an even greater and more lasting medium. The maker of porcelain, centuries later, went to him for patterns, and used them on vases and urns and bowls and plates at which all the world was to wonder.

Silk in China is more than a material for the clothing of the body—a new robe for a feast day, a young girl's bridal dress. It is these, but even more it is that out of which a dream of beauty comes into being, set stitch on stitch, or woven thread on thread with the blending of a hundred tones and shades that another may feel and thrill to an artist's emotion.

Priceless as it already was because of the toil that went to its making, it became more costly as men experimented with it for the sake of beauty.

Silk

Gold and silver threads were woven with it to make imperial robes and tapestries to hang on regal walls. Short threads of metal were interspersed in the webbing of the fabric itself, to give delicate beauty. A thousand patterns and a thousand fancies combined with the magic of silk itself—true beauty coveted by all the world.



BIRTH OF THE DRAGON

Symbol of China

THE earliest forms of vessels found in China show that they were intended to be used in making sacrifice to the dead. It was a dark period of history, and men turned hopefully to the spirit world.

From the most ancient times the Chinese had believed in four supernatural beings—the phoenix, the unicorn, the tortoise, and the dragon. Of these the dragon was the greatest.

The story of the birth of the dragon is not native to China alone, although the Chinese version seems to be the oldest. Creatures very like the Chinese conception of the dragon are mentioned in the Bible. Dragons guarded the gates of the kings of Thebes and Delphi just as they did those of the emperors of China. They were prominent in the palace of Sennacherib. European myths use them in the story of Perseus and Andromeda, Siegfried, and St George. There are also stories of dragons belonging to places, such as those of the Nile, Marseilles, or Norwich.

But the dragon of the West is usually a monster, often the symbol of sin. Saints often went out to meet him in mortal combat.

Unlike the dragon of the West, the Chinese dragon was one who could give gifts to men. He could help man. He had charge of rainfall. This connexion with water is the greatest point of likeness between the eastern and western conceptions of this spirit creature.



HE HAD CHARGE OF RAINFALL

Birth of the Dragon

No one knows how the idea of the Chinese dragon began. Some think of him as the first image of the Creator. Some say he came to China from India, a descendant of one of the Indian Serpent-Kings.

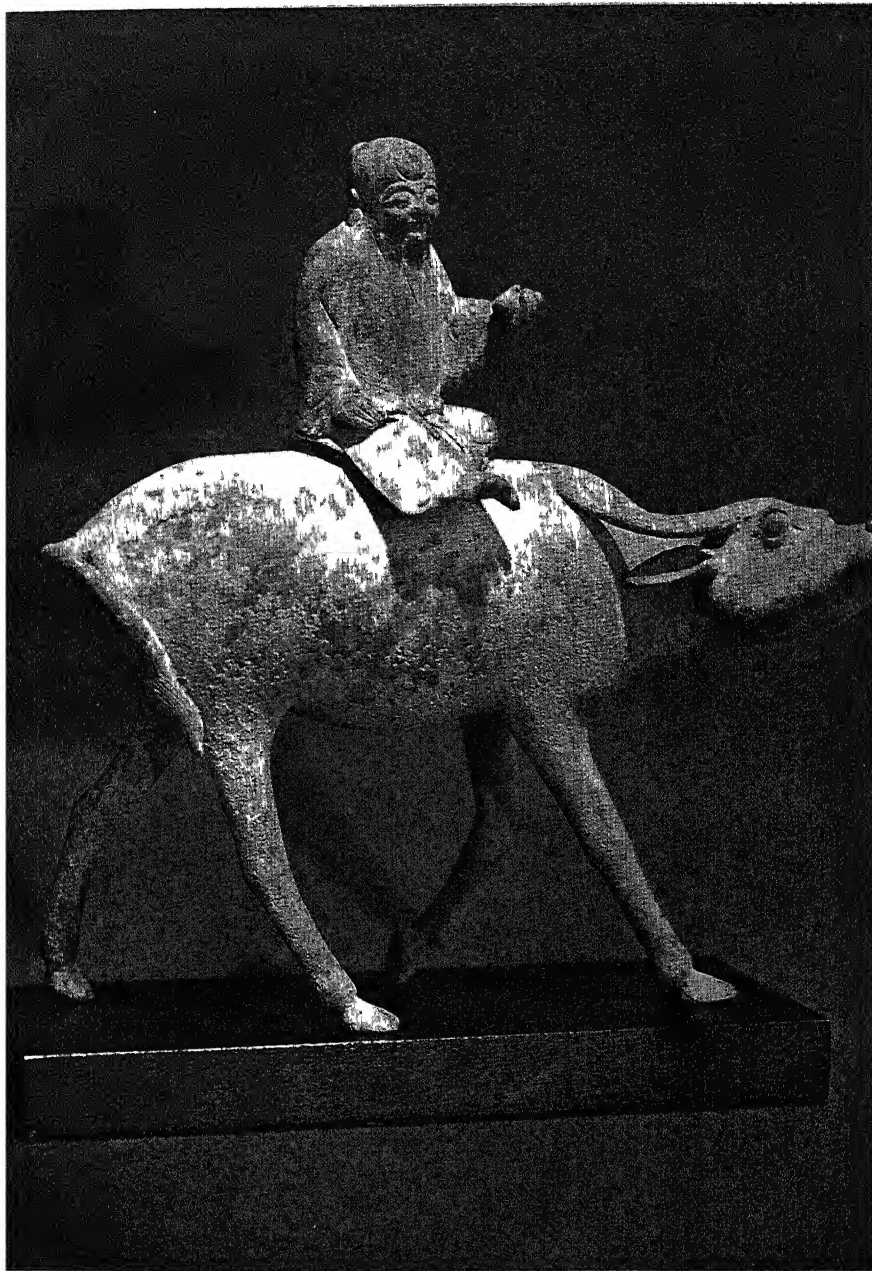
In the reign of the Yellow Emperor, Huang Ti, who was supposed to have ruled from 2697 B.C. to 2598 B.C., there is a record of the first appearance of a true dragon. Whatever that first appearance was, Chinese imagination set to work and gave him the head of a camel, the horns of a stag, the ears of a cow, the neck of a serpent, the scales of a fish, the claws of an eagle, the paws of a tiger. He could be any size—as small as a silkworm, or miles in length. There were soon dragons of the sky—the green spring dragon of the East, the black winter dragon of the North, the white autumn dragon of the West, the red and yellow summer dragons of the South. But best known and most popular was the dragon called simply the Dragon King, who represented fertility. He was the symbol of prosperity and peace.

That the dragon came to have a connexion with water was probably due to a natural accident. The Chinese peasants seeing moisture evaporate and form strange-shaped clouds perhaps imagined a creature's shape. When torrents came from these very clouds, it was the creature's gift to man. There is an ancient saying, "Clouds come from dragons, or dragons from clouds, or winds from tigers."

Because of the dragon's power to rise from earth to heaven, which no man could do, the dragon came in time to be the symbol of the Emperor, whose title was 'The True Dragon.' The dragon decorated the national flag and imperial robes—but this was only after the picture of him stood complete.

The first strokes of that picture are found in the masks of the monsters known as *t'ao-t'ieh*, dug from the same pits as those earliest potteries. But the dragon of China was not really born until much later—not until the people had begun to use a new medium of expression, one more imperishable, responding more perfectly to artistic growth. Bronze pieces compounded of metals dug from the earth were decorated with themes from the skies. Probably these first pieces were cast in single stone moulds. Later they were cast in several parts and then welded together. The oldest pieces are silvery because of the large proportion of mercury in the alloy. It is with the bronzes that the great art of China begins.

As in the case of pottery, the earliest bronzes were made for ceremonial use, and often the shapes and decorations are like those of the potteries.



CHINESE BRONZE INCENSE-BURNER—LAO-TZE ON
A WATER BUFFALO

By courtesy of the Worcester (Mass.) Art Museum and the "Encyclopædia Britannica"

Symbol of China

There are cauldrons standing on three feet welded to them or else issuing from the jaws of the monsters. These were used for heating drinks or cooking. There are bowls for offerings of fruit and vegetables and grain. These are squat, with either two or four handles, and low, round bases. There are slender vase-like wine jars, some with narrow necks opening to bell-shaped lips, some like goblets with bell-shaped feet. There are lidded wine-pots, trough-shaped wine vessels, three-footed wine jugs. There are mirrors and bells.

The background of the decoration is frequently a network of fine lines in fret or key design, a pattern known as the 'thunder pattern' because it is supposed to suggest clouds and rain. Superimposed on this background and standing out in bold relief are protruding eyes, high, long nose, spiralled horns—the *t'ao-t'ieh*, or embryonic dragon.

So there came to be pictured—at first by a suggestion so scarce and scattered that nowhere was the face complete—the creature which was to dominate Chinese life. The more the picture is left to the imagination, the older the pieces seem to be, as though in the mind of the artisan himself the dragon was still indefinite. Gradually he was to take form, to become perfect in every undulating curve, in every shell-shaped scale, pointed claw, and bristling whisker. But throughout the Shang period and the succeeding dynasty, in which the bronzes came to far greater perfection, only a suggestion, sometimes scarcely recognizable when seen at close view, is there. We may call this first suggestive monster head of the *t'ao-t'ieh*, and the dragon which came later, one of its perfected forms.

Some archæologists think of this development in Chinese art as the contribution of the soul of China during a chaotic rule—a translation into form of the mystery of unknown power. Man hoped for power beyond what he knew, and tried to depict it.

In China the sole object of the artist was, not to represent the real world, but on the contrary, gradually to bring reality face to face with a world as moving and unstable as the clouds.¹

So as we look at the scattered suggestions of a monster face on an ancient bronze, we see that it is not that the artist has tried and failed in his effort to produce a known face; instead, his intention has been only to suggest the appearance of a spirit creature.

Out of the unknown and the intangible came the dragon which was

¹ René Grousset: *The Civilizations of the East*.

Birth of the Dragon

to underlie the practical living of the ordinary Chinese—the seasons, the weather, crops, prosperity, famine; to fashion the very decoration on a baby's cap, or the shape of the ear-rings in a woman's dowry. The first phase of the dragon story told in the bronzes was suggestive still—scarcely seen until the eye suddenly perceives it and the face leaps out at one—bold, haunting, alive.

Great art had begun in China, for to form and feeling and colour was added the representation of imagination so real, and so strong, as to seem reality—expressed not in perishable clay, but in metal which could not be corroded or broken, and so could not pass away.



SPIRIT STONE

Jade

THE magic powers of heaven and earth are for ever combined to form perfect results; so the pure essence of hills and water became solidified in precious jade."

For the Chinese the picturing of monsters, the evolution of the benevolent dragon, linked the spiritual world with the world of eating and sleeping and begetting and dying so closely, that the line between the real and the unreal could scarcely be found. The hardness and beauty of jade appealed to the Chinese mind as the embodiment of spiritual quality. Here was something not distant and out of reach, but small and tangible, bringing the world of spirit into the very hand of man.

The origin of the stone is not certain. Some say it was imported from Kotan. Some say it was dug from Chinese earth from its beginning, just as it was to some extent in later times. Some was, we know, imported from Burma and Turkestan. Wherever it came from, beautifully carved pieces have been found dating to prehistoric times. The name by which we know the stone is of Spanish origin, coming from *ijada*, which in turn comes from the Latin *ilia*, meaning loins, for when the Spanish conquerors brought it home, they called it 'colic stone' believing

Spirit Stone

it to have the power of curing pains in the side or abdomen. It is extremely hard because of the way its crystalline fibres are interlaced.

But the Chinese name for jade, *yu*, means much more than the name of a stone. It stands for qualities which the stone suggests—charity, modesty, courage, and wisdom. It was a symbol for the early Chinese, and it is that yet.

Because of its spiritual quality, jade amulets and symbolic pieces are found in ancient tombs of China, and in curio shops one may yet come across mortuary sets, pieces to be placed in the orifices of a corpse—mouth, nose, and ears—to prevent decay, or as the emblem of vitality. Jade was the food of the spirits, the substance of life. Powdered jade mixed with water was supposed to be a powerful remedy, and when hope of life had to be given up the more a dying person could drink of the mixture the slower the process of decomposition. Even to eat from a jade bowl was helpful, from the point of view of immortality.

More important than the employment of jade for purposes like this, however, was its artistic use.

To be painstaking is a quality of the Chinese worker, and it was needed in working in clay and bronze and silk. Even more was it needed when working with jade, for here was a substance extremely hard, to be finished in minute detail, without fine implements.

The cutter uses a sharp wheel of steel, turned to and fro by a strap or treadle. The stone is held against the cutting edge. Water is made to drip on the point of contact to keep it cool. Sometimes the cutter grasps a handful of jade dust and presses it into the cut he is making so that it will help with the grinding.

In this same crude way, thousands of years ago, jade was cut into the discs found with prehistoric objects in the ancient sites of Kansu. Here on jade, as on the bronzes, are the dainty, interlocking lines of the 'thunder pattern' suggestive of rain, as background for the superimposed dragon. Again, some pieces have no decoration at all, but are simply polished to show their perfect beauty—"fragments of crystallized moonlight," as a legend of Kotan puts it. For jade is a substance whose very imperfection is beautiful. Confucius, writing of it several hundred years before the Christian era, said:

In ancient times men found the likeness of all excellent qualities in jade. Soft, smooth, and glossy, it appeared to them like benevolence; fine—like intelligence; angular—like righteousness; hanging down as if it would fall to the ground [in beads]—like propriety [humility]; when struck, yielding



IN THIS WAY JADE WAS CUT

Spirit Stone

a note—like music; its flaws not concealing its beauty nor its beauty concealing its flaws—like loyalty; with an internal radiance issuing from it on every side—like good faith; bright as a brilliant rainbow—like heaven; exquisite and mysterious, appearing in the hills and streams—like the earth; standing out conspicuously in the symbols of rank—like virtue; esteemed by all under the sky—like the path of truth and duty.

Here we find a new step forward in the expression of China's beauty. Here is beauty and mystery told in terms of beauty and mystery. Man no longer had to say what magic was in terms of a substance which in itself held no magic. He could say what he wanted to say in a medium which, for him at least, crossed the bridge between the real and the spiritual. For the Chinese, the cold, yet warm; hard, yet soft; dead, yet living quality of jade was always to transcend simple beauty by a spiritual quality hard to explain to the Western world.

And yet, what was the Chinese mind trying to say three or four thousand years ago? There is still the 'thunder pattern,' the dragon, the plain, smooth, polished stone, the monsters, carved entire, or scarcely more than lines of force. Man was still trying to balance what was, against what might be, escaping sometimes in the sheer relief of beauty for its own sake.

For beauty itself *was* the clearest expression of ancient China. Through every medium that she had, she put into terms which can be read by everyone who gazes upon them even to-day, the fact that beauty itself is history—the deepest and most underlying record of the development of a people.

A jade cutter at his wheel making ear-rings, or polishing a piece of stone which is to be framed by a teakwood stand as a screen with no other scene upon it than that wrought there through millenniums, is an artist. For though he may know scarcely a character, yet he responds to the spiritual quality of *yu* with the understanding of a philosopher. Clear, deep green is his favourite variety of stone, but white and grey and brown and mottled and shaded green all have their own use and beauty.

Jade was used for its musical quality as well as for its beauty. The Emperor Yao, 2300 B.C., left a hymn in praise of a sonorous jade, a hanging stone gong, the *t'eh ch'ing*:

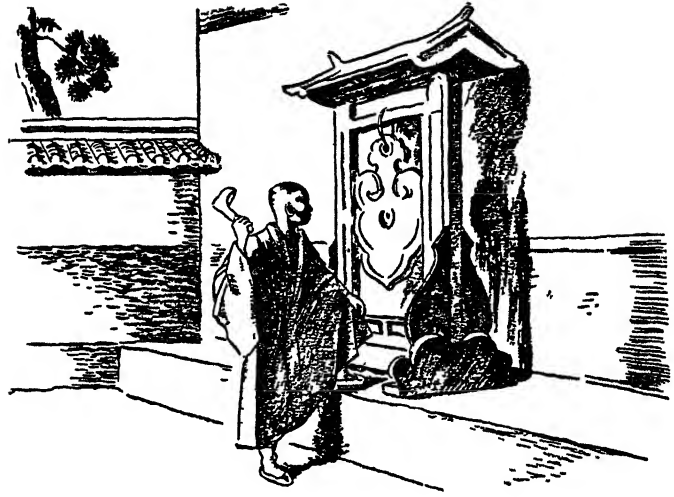
When I smite my musical stone,
Be it gently or strong,
Then do the fiercest hearts leap for joy,
Then do the chiefs agree among themselves.

Jade

When ye make to respond the stone melodious,
When ye touch the lyre which is called ch'in,
Then do the ghosts of the ancestors having pleasure in sweet sounds,
Approach to hear.

For jade was one of the earliest musical instruments, giving out a clear tone—which was not only a pleasant sound but had, as did jade in all its forms, the power to touch the realms of the immortal, calling the “ghosts of the ancestors.”

Beauty spoke through the early Chinese people in form and colour and design and quality of substance and sound. Those who, wherever they may be, stop to look and listen, may still feel the excitement of great art in birth, in growth, and in the attainment of perfection.



“HAVING PLEASURE IN SWEET SOUNDS”

Music

IN the year 2255 B.C. Ta Shao composed a piece of music which sixteen hundred years later Confucius said, “enchanted him to such an extent that he did not know the taste of food for months.”

When we in the West speak of music we are not likely to give much consideration to that of China. Many of us do not know that the Chinese themselves loved music long ago and gave the world the origins of instruments for which the great masters composed some of the world's best loved pieces.

It is not possible to say when the earliest music of China began nor what the first instrument was like, but over two thousand years before Christ there were men in China who felt the rhapsody of it.

Perhaps it began with the sonorous stone which later was used in a group of suspended stones from which a melody could be struck—called by the poetic Chinese the ‘Engaging Jades.’ Perhaps the thumping of drums, primitive among so many peoples, came next, exciting to rhythm and action. Perhaps a reed blown by accident made the first sweet, breathy music which later was to be developed into the *sheng*, a group of short bamboo tubes upon which a ritual tune could be played.

Music

The most beautiful of the ancient Chinese melodies are those used in religious services, and those sung by boatmen and hillsmen who, as they go their lonely way, let their voices ring out fully, or soften hauntingly in the empty spaces beneath the blue China sky. These songs have not the high, falsetto tenseness of the theatrical music, which to the Western ear is unpleasant. Rather are they simple and full of feeling.

The Chinese scale was at first one of five tones, called, with Oriental picturesqueness:

- F, the Emperor
- G, the Prime Minister
- A, the Loyal Subjects
- C, the Affairs of State
- D, the Mirror of the World

When two semitones were put into the scale in 600 B.C. it seemed to some that a tragedy had occurred. And yet to-day the Chinese scales total eighty-four tones, showing a range of true tone unknown to the Western scheme of twenty-four. It is said, in fact, that the Western ear is trained to untrue tones by the setness of its scales, while that of the Chinese distinguishes many which we cannot hear.

The Pipes of Pan of ancient Greece are credited by some people as the beginning of the organ, and yet very early in China the little *sheng* with its sixteen short bamboo pipes fixed in a case is often referred to, too, as the origin of the great pipe organ. An early Russian embassy is said to have carried home these 'clustered bamboo pipes,' inspiring a musician of St Petersburg to invent the accordion and harmonium.

The *ch'in*, or "Moon Lute," referred to in the hymn of praise written by the Emperor Yao in 2300 B.C., was a primitive dulcimer of silken strings fixed to turntable screws. This was developed through the harpsichord into the grand piano.

The *po chung*, or oval bell; the *pien chung*, or sixteen barrel-shaped bells; the *ch'in*, or bamboo flute transversely blown; the *shun*, or mud gourd, the clay ocarina; the embryo clarinet blown through a small reed in the manner of the bagpipe; the *chu*, a wooden tub struck with a mallet; the *yu*, or wooden tiger with a back of iron teeth; the *shou pan*, or black wooden clappers; the *lung hu*, the dragon drum, and many other drums, as well as the *yun loh*, or 'cloud cymbals' suspended in a row, and the 'little stars,' a group of tiny metal castanets—all speak for the early love of the Chinese for music.

"Having Pleasure in Sweet Sounds"

One has only to see the use of music in the daily life of the Chinese to realize how much a part of living it is. Coolies, tamping the earth for a mud wall or a foundation, lift the heavy beam section by ropes which raise it and let it fall again as their leader composes an impromptu verse about whatever may take his fancy—spring in the fields, a neighbour's daughter, a black carrion crow waiting in a near-by tree; while the others who lift with him swing into the chorus of "way-hay-hay-heh-heh-hay!" Thus the work is made more regular, and the minds of the men are diverted by the originality of the composer.

Sometimes boatmen pulling on their oars on a great junk may sing in the same way. This rhythmic singing at work is an old tradition, for preserved in the Tso-Chuan are records of the masons' songs in the city of the Sung about 500 B.C. Even to-day the boatmen, working on barges along the Kailing river in Szechuan province, suggest the Volga boatmen.

A young boy sitting on a water-buffalo which he watches at its grazing, drooping lazily on its broad back, sings of the dragon in the sky, of fighting grasshoppers, or of the Dragon Boat Festival—and the long hours seem shorter. A woman sitting in her doorway, a baby at her breast, her hand slapping a soft beat on his fat, bare body, croons of good meat dumplings, or a tiger suit, or of brothers to come, or interprets a fable taught her by her mother. Coolies carrying their heavy loads to market sing to the time of the swinging baskets, sometimes no more than the 'hi-ya-ho' which is simply the rhythm of work. Men lifting a mighty rock in building—a rock so heavy that the sweat pours from them and every vein stands out as if about to burst—yet sing, for when all join in singing all join in effort, and the rock moves by inches to its place.

But most beautiful are the songs of meditation—a boatman on his little skiff, wind-blown, sun-blackened, singing into the wind with abandon, now low and soft and crooning, now rising to high, excited pitch; a blind man with his three-stringed violin walking slowly down a narrow street late at night, twanging his instrument for staccato notes and singing of the Sages, his voice strengthened by the echo of high walls—weird, poetic, heart-moving; a young man dressed in his best and on his way to market, his eyes shining, his newly cropped head held high, singing of success, of wind and clouds and stars, and, although the words do not tell it, of the merchant's daughter he will see this day.



A BLIND MAN WITH HIS THREE-STRINGED VIOLIN

“ *Having Pleasure in Sweet Sounds* ”

All this has gone on for centuries and will go on. But a new form of music is coming to China. It is born of the war with Japan. The National Anthem, the anthem of the Nationalist Movement, has taken on new beauty and dignity, speaking for a people who are unconquerable. Mass singing has begun. Music unites not only small groups who work together—it unites the nation. The common people sing, guerrillas sing, soldiers at the front sing, war orphans sing. They sing of the march of the guerrillas, of their nation which cannot die, of the Lone Battalion.

It began with a Chinese Christian student who one day saw on the cover of an American song book, “Singing unites a People.” He was a singer, and it gave him an idea. He began with a singing club of sixty people in Shanghai. It included office boys, clerks, storekeepers, and later even rickshaw coolies. In a month the group had grown to three hundred. In six months there were a thousand, singing to an audience of four thousand.

The idea became a movement and spread over the country. Leaders were chosen from any class, anyone who had a good strong voice being eligible. Some composed their own songs. In three years there were three hundred mass song leaders, and when the war broke out these leaders went into the interior to train the soldiers and the common people. The Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides took it up. Sixty refugee children began a tour, starting from Shanghai and going through eight provinces, singing songs, putting on plays, teaching resistance to the enemy.

Everywhere the people were singing to strengthen morale. Generalissimo Chiang K'ai-shek heard of the student who had started the movement and called him to teach the soldiers at the front. For several years he was working with the men in the trenches.

The Chinese have tried in some cases to adapt their patriotic songs to the western scale and harmony. A few are sung in parts. But all Chinese singing still keeps that minor quality which identifies its origin, giving it a rhythm, a tone, an indefinable something which is of the Chinese themselves. Rising from Free China, the words of *The March of the Guerrillas* express the spirit of China's defiance:

Arise! Ye who refuse to be bondslaves!
With our very flesh and blood
Let us build our new Great Wall.
China's masses have met the day of danger;

Music

Indignation fills the hearts of all our countrymen.

Arise! Arise! Arise!

Many hearts with one mind,

Brave the enemy's gunfire.

March on!

Brave the enemy's gunfire.

March on! March on! March on! On!



SAP OF THE SUMAC

Lacquer

THE earliest records of the Chinese were cut upon bones and shells because these were imperishable. But that first history was also written on tablets of bamboo, for the men of the time of Confucius, who was born five hundred years before Christ, referred to the use of bamboo slips. Legend says that Huang Ti, the Yellow Emperor, ordered his servant Tsang Chieh to "make words in the form of imitative symbols." These were written on palm leaves or on bamboo slips. The *Hsiu-shih-lu*, a manuscript of the Ming dynasty, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, says that early writing was done with a pointed bamboo pen on bamboo, with a substance called lacquer. The writing on narrow strips of bamboo is said also to be the reason why Chinese writing runs vertically rather than horizontally. But none of this is completely certain. It is quite probable that some of the bamboo slip inscriptions are very old indeed, for bamboo dries to rock-like hardness, and lacquer becomes imperishable in direct proportion to the length of its exposure to air.

About the year 1000 B.C. the sap of a variety of sumac, the *Rhus vernicifera*, known as the varnish-tree, but not to be confused with the source of paint varnish, was discovered to be useful. The resin-like juice, called *lac*, is a whitish substance which, when exposed to air, darkens to ebony blackness and permanent hardness. This tree was abundant in China.



THE PILLARS OF GREAT TEMPLES ARE BEAUTIFUL
WITH CINNABAR LACQUER

Sap of the Sumac

The Chinese artisan, however, was not one to express himself in words as did the recorder of events. His mind flew to the creation of beauty, as had that of the potter, the Empress Si Ling, and the caster of bronzes. Wooden objects when coated with lacquer were changed from ordinary wood to a new, shining material upon whose surface the fancy could paint—not with coloured clay, but with coloured lacquers and powdered metals and scraps of shell—a crab, a twisted tree, a boat, a landscape, an ancient sage. The ingenuity of the artisan was stimulated, for here was a new medium combining several properties at once, not limited by too great hardness or too great softness, or fixed colours. He seized the most conspicuous and important things of wood for his first experiments. These were chariots and their harnesses. Preserved specimens show them covered with brilliant red, full of symbolic design.

Used at first as a painting or coating, lacquer came slowly to have its own forms. The crude base was still made of soft pine, or sometimes of cloth or metal, but after the first applications of raw lacquer the article could be moulded and pressed, and so built up to have new contours. It was a slow process, slower yet because it was as thoroughly mastered as an art. The sap was drawn from trees ten or more years old. It had to be heated slowly to free it from the moisture which it held. To clear it of imperfections it had to be ground and strained. The objects had to be smoothed and every roughness and crack filled with lacquer putty. After the first coat of lacquer paint the object must be allowed to dry slowly in moist air. Its surface must be rubbed perfectly smooth between each application. A layer of fine cloth or paper was sometimes superimposed to strengthen the surface and cover cracks.

Articles made without wood but with a cloth base were still flexible between the fingers when finished, but of perfect shape. Any lacquer object needed coat upon coat of lacquer—sometimes as many as thirty—each one dried and smoothed.

Certain substances added to the lacquer gave beautiful colour. Cinna-bar made the red so beloved in the oldest pieces, gamboge made yellow, pig's gall and vegetable oil made amber, iron sulphate made black, red and black mixed made brown, orpiment of indigo made blue—and so, many ways led to new beauty for the artisan. But red, sign of happiness and prosperity, was always loved best.

When the tools were ready, the moment for the artist's mind had come. The pattern of decoration was drawn on the lacquered piece in white lead paste. Then it was only necessary for the artisan to carry

Lacquer

it out in various colours of lacquer. Some of the oldest pieces are of red, decorated in designs of mother-of-pearl. *Lac Burgantée*, the French were to name it when first it came to their hands. The beauty of red lacquer invited wider use. Imperial chairs and tables were made of it, and even to-day the pillars of great temples—no one knows how old—are beautiful with cinnabar lacquer.

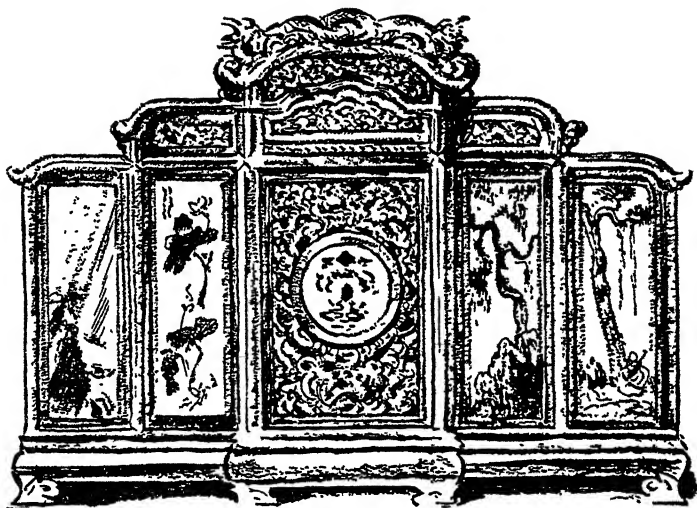
But mother-of-pearl was only one way of developing a design on either black or red lacquer. Flecks of gold or silver put into the last coating seemed accidental beauty. Gold and silver dust blown upon the wet surface made a glistening background for bold design. Added to this beauty was the actual painting of a picture—a group of god-like figures, some scene or landscape, which made what began as the work of an artisan, the work of an artist. Inscriptions were written in gilt.

Later a still more ingenious use of lacquer was found. Deep lacquer could be carved before it thoroughly hardened. The pattern brushed on thin paper was pasted on. Clever hands with sharp tools cut the design in so that it stood in relief, more beautiful in a richer, sober way, than any of the painted lacquer.

Wine cups made of silver were lacquered on the outside and decorated with small precious stones. Some beautiful samples of these are still preserved.

Foochow, in the south of China, came to be the centre of this industry. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries men from Europe were to carry home, in their wave-tossed ships, screens and chairs and trays and tiny boxes made of the magic stuff. White men would put them in their best rooms, and white women would set them on their fancy shelves. Here was something never quite understood, for was it possible that only patience, a sense of the artistic, and the sap of a sumac could create these?

In time people of the West came to talk of lacquer as japauning, and so Japan and China were for ever confused. For Japan had learned from China, and she too produced lacquer objects. So beautiful were they that the traders came to call lacquered objects japanned objects. Thus, in a sense, the credit for the development of lacquer art was dissipated and lost. But in the imperial factory and in small artisans' shops of China the work went on. The Chinese, never anxious for foreign trade, still created beauty with their clever fingers.



FOLDING BEAUTY

Screens

BY the second century before Christ the Chinese had learned the intrigue of suggested space and the invitation of hidden doorways. Because screens were fragile in their structure, no specimen of very great antiquity remains. Yet there are references to them in ancient books.

These early screens seem to have been made with panels of crude glass and mica, and the fact that these materials allowed light to pass through them, or revealed only hints of the view beyond, made them useful for privacy as well as for beauty.

In the next century the frames of the screens were carved, inlaid with jade and other precious stones, or painted in designs. This we know because reference is made to a certain screen decorated with "Figures of Exemplary Women." Ts'ao Pu-hsing, a great painter of the third century, in making a screen one day let a drop of ink fall from his brush. Since Chinese ink cannot be erased, he deftly turned the blot into a fly. So real did it seem that Sun Ch'uan, his friend, tried to brush it away. Shih Hu, another painter of the same period, made folding screens covered with silk and painted them with birds and animals, pictures of sages, and quotations from their writings. The very early screens became more than a means of privacy or beauty; like scrolls, they



SUN CH'UAN TRIED TO BRUSH IT AWAY

Folding Beauty

kept before the eyes the moral sayings and quotations of great men.

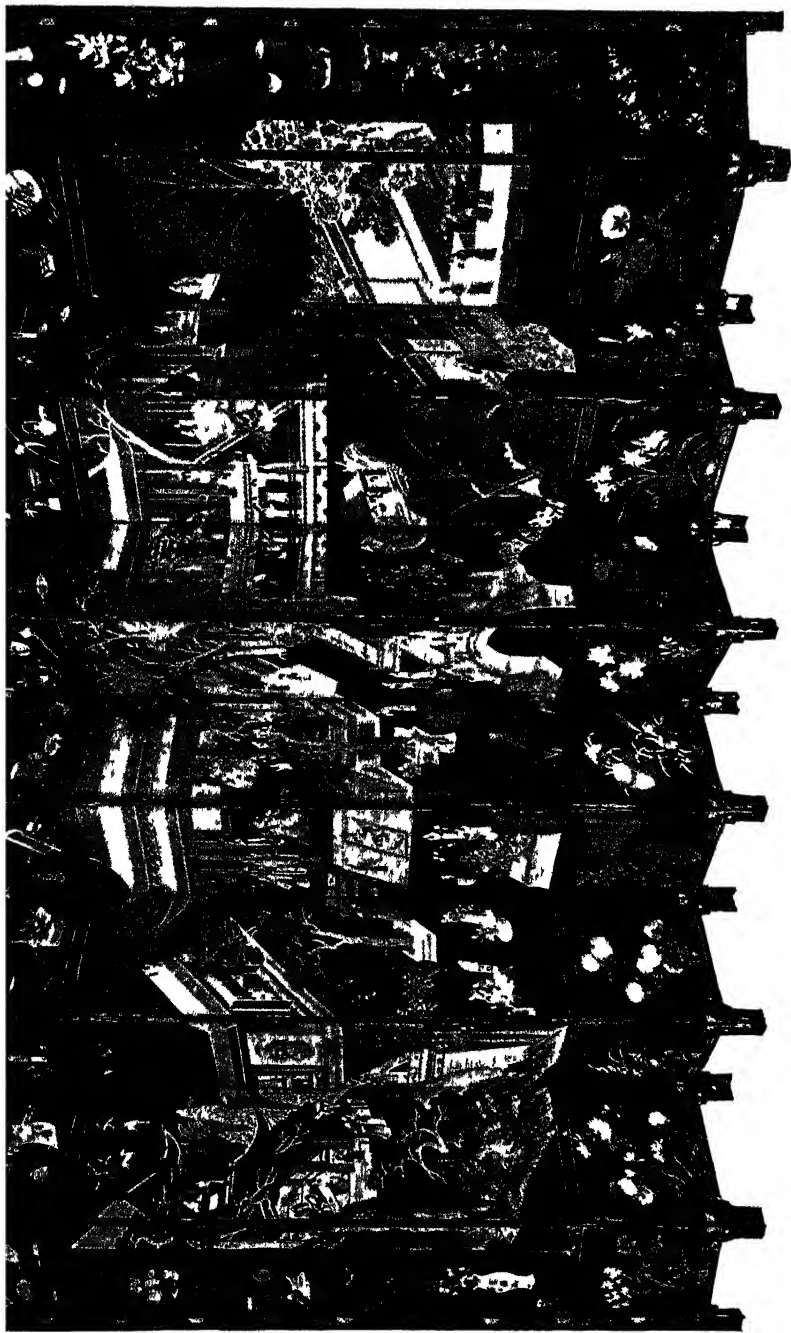
Chinese authorities claim that ancient screens were made with as many as forty leaves in them. This seems possible, for the British Museum possesses one very beautiful one of fourteen leaves. Many of the old screens were decorated with the landscapes that the Chinese loved, or with calligraphy.

As lacquer was perfected it was often used in the making of screens, either as a finish for the frames or on the panels themselves. Sometimes the insets were tapestries, embroideries, or crystal. All of these are mentioned in the literature of the fifth century. But the significance of written words as decoration was not displaced by pure ornamental beauty. It is said that one, Fang Hsuan-ling, collected precepts, had them written on screens, and gave them to his children to guide their behaviour.

In the great age of the T'ang dynasty, the seventh century, screens became one of the most popular items of decoration in homes of the well-to-do and in palaces. They were now set with jewels and gold and silver and must have added much to the richness of interiors. Horses were a favourite design for screens as well as for the paintings of the period, though each painter had his own preference and painted the subject he liked best. A very popular figure for boudoir screens was an imaginary animal known as the *mo*, which was supposed to be able to eat up bad dreams.

As is true in the case of some other phases of China's art, Japan has kept models of these Chinese developments, which China herself has lost. Among the one hundred screens in the collection of the Japanese Imperial Repository are many that were made in China and others which were copied from Chinese models. One very ancient screen, almost certainly of Chinese origin, is a six-fold one which has on each leaf the theme of a woman standing under a tree. This was originally worked in birds' feathers—possibly kingfisher's, as these are frequently used because of their iridescence. Another, covered with precepts for a ruler, has written upon it forty-eight Chinese ideographs, each written twice, once in the seal, or printing, style and once in the script, or running, style. Screens were a medium for the skill of China's great masters.

For two dynasties after the T'ang models of screens are lacking, though we know that they were being made. They were being painted



CHINESE IMPERIAL PALACE SCREEN

By courtesy of Pierre Cauter and the "Encyclopaedia Britannica"

Screens

in monochrome and colours, suggestive and beautiful. Many were carried to Europe, where they were to be the origin of a whole new history of screens.

Then a fresh method of decoration came into being. Wooden screens were lacquered all over and decorated with designs which were cut through the lacquer into the wood. The spaces were then filled with thick, opaque water-colours. These screens came to be known as Coromandel screens, not because of the way they were decorated but because they were shipped for export from the Coromandel coast, the east coast of South India. Most of the examples of Coromandel screens date from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. This period also includes screens made of teak-wood and set with jade or porcelain plaques, and those panelled with silks, tapestries, or embroideries. It is probable that some of the ancient paintings now hanging as scrolls on the walls of collectors are leaves of screens long severed from each other.

More simple and suggestive of unstudied art than the full-sized screens are the small screens—sometimes no larger than a man's hand, sometimes several times as large—used so commonly in Chinese homes purely for decoration. They are very often no more than a single panel of polished jade set in a teak-wood stand, the stone cut to reveal the scene beloved by the Chinese and interpreted by them as mountains and water, traced in the stone by Nature herself. The markings may be grey and black on milky white, or deep brown and light tans on cream. One of these small screens may be of ivory carved to reveal a sage standing beneath a willow, or a woman—*Beauté*—beside a flowing stream. Or it may be a plaque of porcelain painted with the dainty charm found in vases, bowls, and tea-cups. Whatever the material, the screen is but a way to display something beautiful.

Most common of all the screens in Chinese life is the spirit screen. Often, before street entrances, sections of wall are built so as to permit free entrance and exit but so placed as to entirely block the gaze of the curious in the street. Yet the purpose of the screen is not to shut out the human but the spirit world, for, according to Chinese tradition, spirits or demons are unable to move in any but a straight line. The necessity of passing round the end of the short spirit wall in order to enter the gateway safeguards the entrance.

These spirit screens of the outer entrance are most commonly built of brick and topped by a tile roof to correspond to the wall surrounding

Folding Beauty

the garden or compound. But between the inner courts—or sometimes at the entrance of the house itself—the spirit wall is a screen of stone or porcelain tile. Artistic in every line of its construction, it invites rather than defies the entrance of all—except perhaps spirits—who would search beyond.



BEGINNINGS OF THE MOST UNIVERSAL DRINK

Tea

THERE are many legends about the very first use of tea in China. One dates back to 2737 B.C., to the Emperor Shen-nung, the father of Chinese agriculture and medicinal knowledge, who is said to have discovered the use of tea. There is another story about Bodhidharma, a Buddhist missionary from India to China, who lived much later than the Emperor Shen-nung. It seems that he determined to contemplate Buddha for nine years without sleeping. He kept awake for the first three years of his vow and then his eyes closed and he slept. He was so angry at his failure that he cut off his eyelids and threw them on the ground. Another five years of keeping awake passed and then again he fell asleep. He plucked some leaves from a near-by shrub and chewed them and to his astonishment, felt his drowsiness pass and his senses stimulated. Because of the leaves he was able to finish the last year of his vow without again growing sleepy.

The true beginning of the use of tea is hard to find. It seems to have been in use as early as the Chin dynasty, a few centuries after the birth of Christ. The tea bush, the *Camellia theifera*, belonging to the family Theaceæ, was probably indigenous to Eastern Asia from ancient times.

Beginnings of the Most Universal Drink

It grows easily in the central and southern parts of China. Early Arab sources tell of tea being used for infusion in the ninth century. From there it spread to Japan, where it was soon under cultivation.

The story of tea is a double one, for there is the story of the use of tea in China itself and there is the story of the trade in tea which was destined to have a mighty part in the history of China and India and England. This last story began with the earliest traders in the East and has not yet ended.

The earliest mention of tea by an Englishman is in a letter by a Mr Wickham, agent of the East India Company, the first foreign company to trade with China. The letter is written from Firando, Japan, dated June 27, 1615, and is addressed to a Mr Eaton, representative of the same company in China, in Macao, the Portuguese port in South China. Mr Wickham asks, on his arrival in Macao, for "a pot of the best kind of *chaw*," this last being the English spelling of the Chinese word for tea. { Tea was scarcely known in England even fifty years later. Pepys writes (September 25, 1666): "I did send for a cup of tee, a China drink of which I had never drunk before."

An advertisement in *Mercurius Politicus* (No. 435, of September 1658) says:

That excellent and by all Physitians approved China Drink, called by the Chineans Teha, by other nations Tay, alias, Tee, is sold at the Sultanness Head, a cophee house in Sweetings Rent, by the Royal Exchange, London.

In 1659 or the following year Thomas Garraway, the first English tea dealer and founder of the well-known coffee-house, "Garraway's," put out a broadsheet which he said would give "an exact description of the Growth, Quality, and Virtues of the Leaf Tea." The paper states: "In respect of its scarceness and dearness it hath been used only as a regalia in high treatments and entertainments and presents thereof made to princes and grandees."

Tea was scarce and hard to get when brought the long way round, by the Cape of Good Hope, in the small sailing-vessels of the new-born East India Company, chartered by Queen Elizabeth in the year 1600.

A hundred years from the time that Pepys spoke of the drink as something he had never drunk before, the export from China to England was ten million pounds; to America, which was never the tea-drinking nation that England became, nearly nine hundred thousand pounds. In another thirty years the trade with each nation had tripled.



THE HOST LIFTS HIS CUP

Beginnings of the Most Universal Drink

The East India Company was one of several competitors in the rich trade not only of China but of India and the Indies. She was soon to outwit and outwin those who contested with her, so that this private company, the East India Company, became the political power of India, a fact upon which the fate of an era might well turn.

The English people liked tea and drank more and more of it. It became an institution, and was served before rising, at meals, and in the afternoon. The good East Indiamen brought it in after a while, not by the long route, but by the route much shortened by the Suez Canal. Consumption had begun to climb to its peak of nine pounds per person per year. But to the Americans tea was a medium of trade. They drank it, but never as the English did, for coffee was more to the American taste.

The Japanese have an intricate tea ceremony which has to be learned and carried out with precision. The Chinese do not have the same custom—and yet the drinking of tea in China is much more than the mere serving of a drink.

A guest is announced. He is met at the outer gate, ushered in, and shown to the highest seat in the formal guest room. A servant runs to brew tea. The best, rice-grain patterned, lidded tea-bowls are set in their brass stands, and a few pinches of jasmine or chrysanthemum tea-leaves, dependent upon the season, put in each. Water boiling well with a noisy gurgling—preferably sweet water from an ancient well or a famous spring—is poured on, and the lids set in place. A cup is borne in, both hands holding each cup. It is extended to the guest, who stands to receive it or while it is placed on a small table beside his seat. The tea is allowed to brew and cool for a time, while host and guest talk politely of the season and of their families. The host lifts his cup and waits until the guest, with much urging, lifts his. The host murmurs, "*Ch'ing* [Please]," again and again, and the guest replies, "Thank you—I am not worthy." Each waits for the other. At last the guest, knowing that he must make pretence of sipping before bowls can again be set down and the conversation proceed, takes a tiny sip, exclaiming over the fragrance of the tea. The host sips also. The guest then asks where such excellent tea could possibly have been bought. It must have been fabulous in price! It is so perfectly cured. Excellent! Excellent! Too good for an old friend.

The best gift that one can give in China is a fine box of the best tea. Every guest, whether he has come on business or for pleasure, whether

Tea

he is rich or poor, an official or a beggar, is served with tea. For tea is the drink of China. The only water that is drunk is hot water, thoroughly boiled, and fed to old people or babies or the sick. And even babies drink of the pale green tea, which is the Chinese tea, rather than the black tea that the West knows best, because no one, unless it is a coolie who stops beside a mountain stream, would dream of drinking plain cold water.

There are many names for tea, and there are many varieties of it. The Chinese have always called it *ch'a* except in the extreme south where it is *té*, probably the origin of the Western name. All varieties come from one bush, for tea varies not because of differing origin, but because it is plucked from a different part of the branch, or because it is cured in different ways. The nearer the tip-bud the leaf is, the better it is. Thus there are two names for each type of leaf—one when it is prepared as black tea, and one when it is prepared as green tea. The tip-bud may be black flowery orange pekoe or green pinhead; the second leaf, orange pekoe or gunpowder; the third leaf, pekoe or imperial; the fourth leaf, pekoe-souchong or young hyson; the fifth leaf, souchong or hyson.

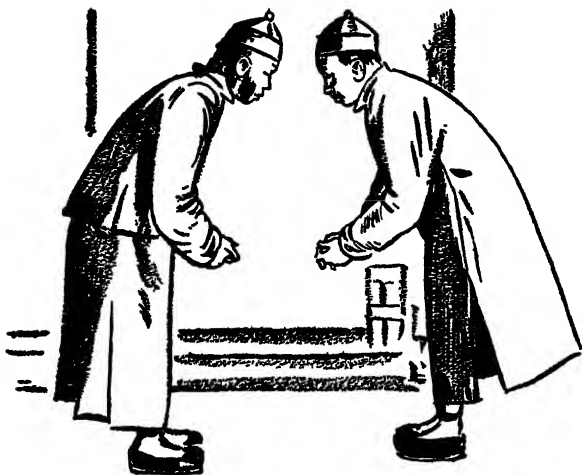
The difference between the preparation of black tea and green tea lies in whether or not the leaf is allowed to ferment. If it is first heated so as to check the fermentation certain oils remain in forms which are not soluble when the tea is brewed. This is what is done in the preparation of green tea. Tannin is unchanged in green tea and is more available than in black tea. Its presence gives a slightly bitter taste. In black tea a certain degree of fermentation takes place before the heating checks it. Some oils are changed and become more soluble, and it is these which give the brew a dark colour. Black tea is usually wilted and rolled to bring these oils to the surface, where the air can more easily act on them, before the firing or roasting process begins. All tea is rolled, usually by crude hand-machines—though sometimes by a factory process—before being finally dried and packed for shipment. Since tea absorbs odours, it is easy to give it special fragrances and so it is often packed with dried flower petals—jasmine, chrysanthemum, and other spicy blossoms. Brick tea is made of tea dust and leaf scraps which are steamed and pressed into moulds. Much of this is bought by Russia, where tea is boiled with spices rather than brewed in the Chinese way.

Tea is named sometimes for the place on the stem from which it is

Beginnings of the Most Universal Drink

plucked, sometimes for the way it is cured, but many times for the locality in which it grows. One of these is the well-known Oolong tea named after the Misty Dragon Mountains, near Foo-chow.

In the development of the use of tea there is still the touch of the Chinese artist. Here is a small green leaf, but it is much more than a small green leaf. It is a world trade. It is the opening of a continent. It is the habit of half the world. It is a business deal between great merchants. It is respect shown to ancestors. It is courtesy at its best between official and subjects. It is affection and honour for the elders. It is heart-to-heart chatter between two women. It is solace to an old man, weak and cold and tottering with age. Lukewarm, it is a safe drink for a thirsty child. Steaming hot, it gives comfort to an ill-clad coolie stopping at a street-corner on a windy day. It is the clatter of bowls, laughter, and hearty conversation in a tea-house or a theatre. It is all these because the Chinese have made it so.



“THE TAIL IS LARGE AND CANNOT BE WAGGED”

Democracy

FROM the eighth to the third centuries before the Christian era China was a good deal like the Europe of that time—a country of feudal states with rivalries and excesses and a constant struggle to embrace new peoples. This China, feudalistic though she was, differed in one thing from the Europe of that day; several of her states were already forming themselves into a league or alliance. At last, near the end of the fourth century, these leading states emerged under the leadership of the Ch'in.

During this period of political development, which brought China from feudalism to imperialism, art and literature went on. Though we know little of the religion of this time, we do know that it was one of strong belief in the spirit world. Gods and goddesses were near and influenced every part of daily life.

Perhaps the very closeness of this spirit world caused the philosophy of this period to become interested not in involved theory, but in the creation of a workable human society—a way by which men could best live together. The Tso-chuan, an ancient book dating probably from the second century before Christ, recognizes the common people. It sprang from the times of the greatest Chinese philosophers.

Confucius is the man to whom is attributed the greatest development

"The Tail is Large and cannot be wagged"

of the Chinese ideal of human society. He was born in a small village of what is now the province of Shantung. Although some of his followers became important also, to Confucius is attributed the foundation of Chinese philosophical thought as the world knows it to-day.

Confucius was interested in the relation of the State to its subjects, of subjects to the State; in the relations within the family, each member in his proper place. He felt that if each one observed the right rules of behaviour, if each man followed tradition, or tried ways—then society would of itself be perfect. He sought the development of the *chun-tzu*, or perfect man.

This emphasis on the value of the individual later came to be the basis of democracy. It was no longer possible for one man to treat others as his property. Man himself had certain rights and certain obligations, and men together made the family, the village, the nation—a mighty mass which held the final power.

Even though China was to go through a long period of imperialism and foreign rule, because of her democratic units—the family and the village—she was still basically a democratic nation. Distances were so great and transportation so slow that the only possibility of centralized authority would have lain in a vast organization of horsemen who could enforce law. Instead of this, power was decentralized. It lay in the villages and the towns themselves. It was carried on by the elders or head men. These might be chosen by the villagers, who were responsible not only for getting them their positions, but also for their actions; or they might be men who, by their native ability, climbed to positions of importance. Under these men were other officers such as the constable. The people were always free to meet for discussion as they liked.

The invention of the civil service examination system by the Chinese began before the time of Confucius, but so highly were the teachings of the Confucian school looked upon that they came to be studied by those who wished to take the examinations. Advancement to important official positions was by merit system open to every one. Any boy might study for the civil service examinations, but, owing to the rigid way in which the Confucian ideals were enforced, those with mathematical, medical, or scientific bent were at a disadvantage compared to those with purely literary talents.

Confucian classics dealt with relations between men, and stressed social values. This background in Confucian culture grew so strong



CONFUCIUS SOUGHT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PERFECT MAN

"The Tail is Large and cannot be wagged"

that when China went through political upheavals it was sometimes her culture rather than her government that held her together. Even in the twenty centuries during which China was a monarchy this theory of democracy was the basis for advancement. Confucius himself said, "You can rob an army of its general, but you cannot rob even a common man of his will."

The very foundation of the China that was to come was laid in the slow, careful study of the Chinese philosophers, and nothing could ever change that foundation. In this emphasis on the worth of man Chinese democracy approached the Christian ideal before the dawn of that ideal, in the person of its founder.

However, it is not true to say that Chinese democracy is like that of the Western world. With the wisdom of a history, not forgotten, but living and guiding them even yet, the Chinese do not set a fixed ideal and work towards it, fully expecting, as do those of the West, to reach it within a given time. For, in spite of their idealism, the Chinese are realists. They know what man is. Their democracy lies in the *way* they live, not in the reaching of an end. As a Chinese saying puts it, "It is easy to paint a goblin, but hard to paint a horse." Dreams come easily, and the fancy is free; facts are hard, for the truth is binding.

An ancient saying from Sun Tzu says:

If you know both yourself and your opponent, you need not fear in one hundred encounters. If you know only yourself but not your opponent, you will lose once for every time you win. If you know neither yourself nor your opponent you will lose every time.

China absorbs, is pushed back, suffers, but never has she really been defeated.



RECORDED THOUGHTS

Calligraphy

THE great philosophers of China, even Confucius himself, would have been mute so far as history is concerned had it not been that China had already a perfected written language.

By the time of Confucius, five hundred years before Christ, the Chinese language was far advanced, though no one knows completely the details of its origin and development. We do know that the Chinese written language is one of the earliest developed in the history of man. It was capable of expressing complex thoughts with varying shades of meaning when the Anglo-Saxons were struggling with a much cruder tongue.

Probably the Chinese character began with the knotted cord, and gradually advanced through the stages of pictogram and ideograph, eventually attaining its present development of combined symbols of sound and meaning. The Chinese often still use the conventionalized ideograph; for example, two legs for 'man,' the sun appearing over the horizon for 'day,' or as some explain it, the conventionalized picture of the round sun; the 'moon,' too, is represented in the same way, while 'horse' is easily interpreted by the picture of a horse. Pictures of 'sheep,' 'fish,' and a host of others suggest their meaning.

Recorded Thoughts

Modern Chinese dictionaries are planned on the basis that one part of the character gives the pronunciation, and another suggests the meaning. Although there are often more than these two parts to the character, this method is still a key to the word itself. The Chinese have enumerated and put in order of the number of strokes, two hundred and fourteen symbols or radicals. Characters are therefore listed according to their radical composition, and not to their phonetic composition.

But from the artistic point of view it is not the history of Chinese calligraphy but the calligraphy itself that is fascinating. Chinese words picture actions as well as objects, and appeal to the eye as well as to the mind. *It grows with difficulty* is expressed by a character representing grass with twisted roots. The 'sun' underlying the 'bursting forth of plant life,' makes 'spring.' 'Rice field' and 'struggle' together make 'male.' 'Man' standing by his 'word' is 'belief' or 'faith.'

The flowing brush-strokes of a Chinese pen are more than the inscribing of a thought. They are the expression of rhythm—rhythm in the abstract. Put in this way, it is the epitome of abstractness to the Western mind, until one comes to share the pleasure experienced by the Chinese in contemplating a picture of barren rocks done in a few bold strokes. For calligraphy in Chinese art is a study of form and rhythm, and it is this that has given the Chinese their basic notions of line and form. From calligraphy came painting, and from it, too, came a certain feeling for architectural types. The flowing curves, the straight lines, and the graceful angles of a temple roof or widow's arch have their root in the strokes of a writer's brush.

Calligraphy and painting have ever been considered twin arts in China. The act of writing in China is esteemed as are the strokes of a painter's brush in the West. The rules controlling writing are exacting, and great calligraphers have become great only after long and patient practice—practice not only of the arm and wrist and hand and fingers, but practice of the eye, to see, and of the mind, to feel the quality of the stroke with all its implications and suggestions. Very often great Chinese painters were also great calligraphers, which is not the case in the West.

In some ways the Chinese themselves honour calligraphy beyond painting. Paintings always represent something, some object or some scene. Thus, in looking at a painting the mind is drawn in two ways at once—towards the fairness of the representation as well as to the quality of the strokes themselves. But in calligraphy, the strokes are



A CHINESE LETTER-WRITER

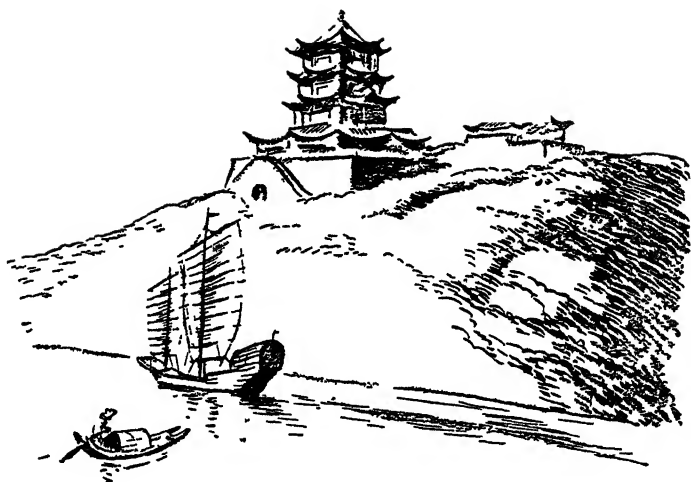
Recorded Thoughts

free from the necessity of trying to represent anything. One may think only of their one significance, that of feeling the witchery of line, the pureness of form. There are eight fundamental strokes of writing—a horizontal bar, a vertical line, a diagonal downward to the left, a diagonal downward to the right, and so on—and these are carried over into painting as being the essential ways of using a brush.

Although writing does not represent what one sees in the way that painting does, Chinese writing is related to observation of nature—plants and animals. Thus the branches of a plum-tree, a dried vine clinging to a wall, the springing body of a leopard, the arched back of an angered cat, the swift legs of a deer, the sinewy strength of a horse, the bushiness of a bear, the ruggedness of a pine branch, are all incorporated into the strokes of a Chinese calligrapher.

Wang Hsi-chih (321-379), China's greatest calligrapher, said:

Every horizontal stroke is like a mass of clouds in battle formation, every hook [stroke] like a bent bow of the greatest strength, every dot like a falling rock from a very high peak, every turning of the stroke like a brass hook, every drawn-out line like a dry vine of very great old age, and every swift and free stroke like a runner on his start.



ARCHED BRIDGES AND FLOWING ROOFS

Architecture

CALLIGRAPHY influenced Chinese architecture in ways noticeable even to-day. The problem of revealing or concealing skeleton structure is exactly the same as that of the problem of touch in the brush-stroke. Lines in Chinese writing do not merely outline, but have form in themselves. The framework of a building is not covered as it would be in the West, because the Chinese believe that as it forms the basic quality of the building it should be revealed, bold, and clear. Rafters and intersecting beams and massive pillars stand out in graceful, related beauty. Archways are barely more than framework, contrasting strong supporting lines with waving curves. The closest relation to calligraphy is in the roof forms. Here the sweep and sag are almost exactly those of the brush-stroke—a strong, long stroke with tension suggested by slight deepening of the sag.

As calligraphy is based on the irregularity of nature, so architecture, too, imitates the irregularity of nature and strives to avoid long, straight lines. Balustrades break the extent of a bridge. Pagoda roofs interrupt the long, hard lines of high, straight walls. Pillars are carved with embracing dragons which check their hardness and change them to graceful curves found in all that is serpentine in nature. Here the dragon

Arched Bridges and Flowing Roofs

serves a practical purpose as well as a symbolic one. Windows are of every conceivable shape—leaf, fruit, fan, melon, octagon, round. Where they must be square they are broken within themselves by delicate tracery of lattice-work which is rarely simple but carries out some motif combining straight and curved lines. Windows from the same building looking into a court are usually of several different designs. There is little uniformity.

Where pillars are straight and undecorated they are beautiful with vermilion or ebony lacquer, and end under the eaves in a riot of brackets and cornices and bars. Looking up along the shining surface of a pillar in a temple, one's eyes are held by an intricacy of form and a mingling of colour—for where the pillar is of one colour only, the maze above it is likely to be soft green, Chinese red, gold, heavenly blue, turquoise, or coral, touched and high-lighted by black.

There is symbolism in every detail of the decoration; in the little animals that chase one another down along the ridges of the roof or hide beneath the upturned eaves; in the dragon that lies in wait to thrust out his fangs and dilated nostrils at the unexpected observer; in the small bats which cling like painted medallions to the surface of the beams themselves. Everything has its history and its meaning, for Chinese buildings are not only places for the abode of men and gods. They are the expression of Chinese artistic feeling, arising from the stroke of an old calligrapher who stoops, brush held carefully in hand, point made painstakingly on the ink slab, mind set ready for the making of a perfect stroke.

Architecture in China is less the profession of the stonecutter and the mason than of the woodcutter. Walls are but the filling in of the structure of wood. Bracketing, which makes possible the support of enormous roofs on slender pillars and archways, is one of the oldest discoveries of the builders of the world. The weight, distributed by brackets of increasing size as height grows greater, may be enormous.

The decoration of a building is left to the woodcarver, as it is chiefly his work. In imperial buildings he uses floral scrolls taken from nature, panels of dragons in clouds, phoenixes in couples. A heavy dark wood known as *Pterocarpus* is used for this kind of work. In the more ordinary buildings such as the homes of the rich and the smaller temples, varieties of ebony, rosewood, and redwood are used. For ages one of the favourites of the woodcarver has been the white sandalwood imported from India. The Chinese call it *chan-tan* from the Indian *chandana*.



BRIDGES ACROSS CANALS ARE GRACEFUL ARCHES

Arched Bridges and Flowing Roofs

Buddhist monks' rosaries are made of it, while chips of it are burned in sacrifice or are pounded to dust and made into joss sticks. Buddhist shrines are lavishly decorated with carvings in which the lotus—the flower of Nirvana—predominates.

Representative of Chinese architecture are the farmhouses, with their curved, thatched roofs, standing beneath clumps of trees. Miniature wayside shrines have upturned corners like great temples. The bridges across canals are graceful arches, useful as well as beautiful, for fishing boats and houseboats can pass easily beneath them when water is running high. Tea-houses standing on piles along the river's edge are intricate with lattices. Guildhalls are brilliant with gilded carving and inscription, and tower with tier on tier of roofs. Pagodas which dot the countryside pierce the sky, not starkly, but with graceful charm.

Poor as the Chinese labourer is, and lacking what in the West is considered a decent standard of living, the coolie has yet a sense of art. Even though he may not be able to make out more than the character *fu*, meaning prosperity, he will slope his roof carefully, work a window in his courtyard wall, not squarely and unimaginatively but with circles and half-circles shaped of ordinary roof tiles.

Neither poverty, hunger, nor hard work can kill the spirit of art. Nothing but death can stop man's need of beauty—a beauty suggested rather than carried out, a beauty perhaps seen only by himself. In China suggestion is always there.



CHINESE HIPPOCRATES

Medicine

THE origin of Chinese medical lore goes back to the beginnings of Chinese history itself. As in the case of all peoples, the Chinese searched for healing when there was pain. Like other primitive men, they did not understand the causes of suffering and could not easily discover them, and so tended to believe that these were controlled by the Unknown—the realm of thunder and lightning, fire, sun, moon, and stars. Disease came to be the possession of the body by evil spirits. The earliest Chinese healing is not the healing of herbs but of charms and spells and incantations. The first doctor was a priest and the first priest a doctor. In 1140 B.C. the two professions were separated. This is traced in the very Chinese word itself. The early character for doctor is made up of three parts which are, a quiver or chest of arms, a hand grasping a weapon, a sorcerer or priest. The meaning is that the priest used strong weapons to kill diseases. Later, the third part of the character instead of being sorcerer changed to the symbol meaning wine, which shows that the priest was no longer the one who healed but that decoctions and elixirs were given to the patient.

Gradually two theories of internal causes of disease developed. One theory was that two opposite principles called *yang* and *yin* were the origin of all nature and of all life. They were like light and dark, sun

Chinese Hippocrates

and moon, male and female. Just as all living and coming into being was classified into *yang* and *yin*, so all parts of the body were divided into these two types. The skin was *yang* and the internal parts *yin*. The heart and liver were *yang* while the spleen, lungs, and kidneys were *yin*. Diseases were grouped according to whether they were caused by a superabundance of the *yang* element or of the *yin* element, and their treatments were based on this theory.

Another theory of internal cause of disease had to do with the five elements of life, which were considered to be metal, wood, water, fire, and earth. The human body was supposed to be made up of a harmonious mixture of all. If the balance was disturbed then illness followed.

Winds were thought to be one of the commonest external causes of sickness. Because of this, one very early method of treatment had to do with expelling the wind that caused the trouble. Acupuncture is said to go back to that most famous half-legendary character, Huang Ti, the Yellow Emperor, although it was not perfected until the time of Chang Chung-ching, China's greatest ancient physician, often called the Chinese Hippocrates. Acupuncture was carried to Japan and westward to Europe; it was of particular interest in France. Ten-Thyme, a Dutch surgeon, wrote a paper on it which appeared in London in 1683.

Acupuncture was the puncturing of certain points of the body with various kinds of needles. There were three hundred and sixty-five points for puncturing, each having supposed relation with the internal organs. There were nine varieties of needles, depending upon the size, the type of point, and the substance of which they were made. They could be used hot or cold, pushed in only a short distance by pressure of the hand or driven in by a small mallet. Sometimes they were left in for days. The patient was usually ordered to cough to expel the evil wind that caused the trouble.

Moxa, or moxibution, is another peculiarly Chinese method of treatment which was of very early origin. It consists of combustible cones of common mugwort being applied to the skin at certain points and ignited. We think of this as counter-irritant, but to the Chinese it was more than this, because the cones were placed in a geometrical arrangement with special regard to the sources of the disease. Early Portuguese navigators are reported to have carried this method to the West, where later it became the electro-moxa treatment.

The Japanese are especially clever at massage; they learned this from



'YANG' AND 'YIN' WERE THE ORIGIN OF ALL NATURE

Chinese Hippocrates

China, where it has been known and practised from the earliest history. Mencius mentions it in his works. In the T'ang dynasty its value was so highly regarded that it was made one of the seven branches of medicine. Chinese massage is more varied than the massage of the West, including severe tapping, kneading, pinching, chaffing, and pommelling of the body, with delightful after-effects. Massage degenerated in China and now it is practised chiefly by barbers, who administer it with a shave and a haircut. Massage was first brought to European notice in the eighteenth century through publications of the Jesuit fathers. In the West it has many adaptations through the use of electricity.

Hua T'o, a Chinese doctor born about A.D. 190, is worshipped as the God of Surgery, and from the records he seems to have been the greatest ancient Chinese surgeon. To the West he is important because he discovered the use of anæsthetics. What anæsthetic was used is not known except that it was a white powder which effervesced in wine, producing numbness and insensibility. Hua T'o is said to have been able to open the body, remove the diseased portion, suture the parts together, apply a salve, and bring about a cure in due time.

Because of the Confucian doctrine surgery could not come to any great development in China. The teaching of Confucius that the body was sacred and could not be mutilated was an obstacle—first, in the dissection of the body which was necessary for any exact knowledge of anatomy, and, second, in the development of surgery which was dependent upon this and upon a certain mutilation. Thus the man who had brought about the belief in the value of the individual and the harmonious relationships of society also checked one of the great steps necessary for their physical preservation in China.

The recognition of diseases is extremely hard to trace in Chinese medical history because descriptions are not clear. Yet it seems almost certain that a book known as *Prescriptions for Emergencies*, written by a Taoist priest who lived in the years A.D. 281–361, speaks of smallpox. It says:

Recently there have been persons suffering from epidemic sores which attack the head, face, and trunk. . . . If not treated early the patient usually dies. Those who recover are disfigured with purplish scars which do not disappear until after a year. This is due to poisonous air. The people say that it was introduced in the reign of Chien Wu when that king was fighting the Huns at Nan Yang. The name of Hun pox has been given to it.

In the reign of Jen Tsung (A.D. 1023–63), of the Sung dynasty, a philo-

Medicine

sopher who lived in the O Mei mountains of Szechuen was said to have discovered a way of preventing the disease. We know that Indians and Persians used inoculation at an early date. As smallpox was brought to China by the Huns, and as the O Mei mountains are on the borders of India, it is possible that inoculation originated in India. It is said that the Prime Minister, Wang Tan, sent for the old philosopher, who successfully inoculated the son of the Minister by using a scab of a smallpox pustule. This sort of inoculation became very common in China and is in use even to-day. It is effective but dangerous.

More interesting than the story of inoculation is that of vaccination, for it is likely that the Chinese developed it in the sixteenth century, two hundred years or more before Jenner.

It is recorded that Li Shi-sen used cow fleas to prevent smallpox. There were two kinds, black and white, but for this purpose only the white were used. They were ground into powder, mixed with rice flour, and shaped into pills. "It is not at all impossible that fleas of a cow infected with variola, might, when taken by the mouth, have the same effect as vaccination," says the *History of Chinese Medicine*, written by K. Chimin Wong and Wu Lien-Teh, both notable medical men of modern China. But although this practice was used for some time, it seems not to have spread and to have been forgotten.

Very early in the history of China leprosy was known. It was called the sickness of the great wind. In the fourteenth century Chu Tan-chi used chaulmoogra oil, one of the most recent treatments, for its cure.

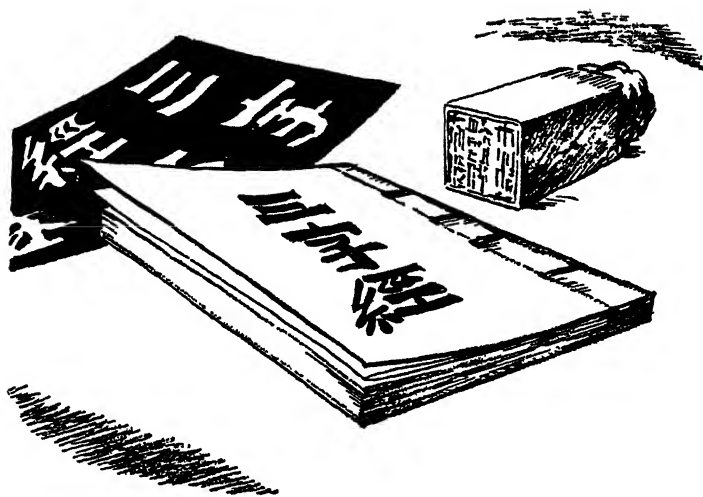
Few Westerners think of China as having contributed to medical science, yet many will agree that some medicinal herbs originated there. There are many histories of pharmacopœia in China, but the most famous of them all is the *Pen Ts'ao Kang Mu*, or the *Great Herbal*. It was begun by the same Li Shi-sen, a magistrate, in A.D. 1552 and finished twenty-seven years later. The work has fifty-two volumes. These cover an immense range which includes parts of the human body to be used in medicine.

This book is the best work on Chinese *materia medica*. It not only mentions all sorts of extraordinary things like tiger's bones and bats' dung, but also many things which are to be found in the modern pharmacopœia. Some of these are kaolin, eumenol, chaulmoogra oil, and ephedrin. Research is being done on the findings of these early doctors, and surprising results are frequently recorded.

But because the Chinese are not of a scientific turn of mind, nor exact

Chinese Hippocrates

by nature, their great discoveries in medicine were not perfected until Western minds took them and made them into unerringly useful forms. Many simple and reasonable internal remedies exist in China, but to the Chinese people the knife of the surgeon is the knife of magic. Confucius restricted the art of surgery among the Chinese, but his people eagerly accept this art of the West. Where they may fear a pill they will submit willingly to surgical operation. Perhaps they face surgery with stoicism because their philosophy and their history of suffering have made them probably the best patients in all the world; perhaps because a tumour removed and carried home triumphantly in its bottle of alcohol is visible evidence of a conquered disease.



THAT MANY MAY READ AND KNOW

Early Books

THE story of the discovery of paper, and hence of bookmaking, begins two hundred years before Christ. China's first records were those inscribed on bones. Later, the Chinese made use of bamboo slips, or wrote on wood. This writing was done with a bamboo pen and lacquer ink. The slips were about nine inches long and wide enough for a single line of words. Short messages were usually written on pieces of wood, while books were written on bamboo. Perforations were made at one end of the bamboo slips and the slips were strung together on silken cords or leather thongs, in chapters. This method was in general use for a long time, but the bulkiness of these records and histories made the handling and transportation of them a problem.

The invention of the hair brush by Meng T'ien in 220 B.C. brought a new development in writing, for now it was done on silk and books became rolls. In the Chinese character the word for *chapter* was changed to *roll* and the word for writing-material, *bamboo and wood*, was changed to *bamboo and silk*.

The invention of the hair brush was important, for not only was it the basis of Chinese calligraphy as an art, but also of painting. Even

That Many may read and know

more, it was important because of its part in the story of paper. For a while brush writing was done on silk cloth. Then began the search for a writing-material more easily obtainable. Papermaking was attempted, the first paper being made entirely of silk fibre.

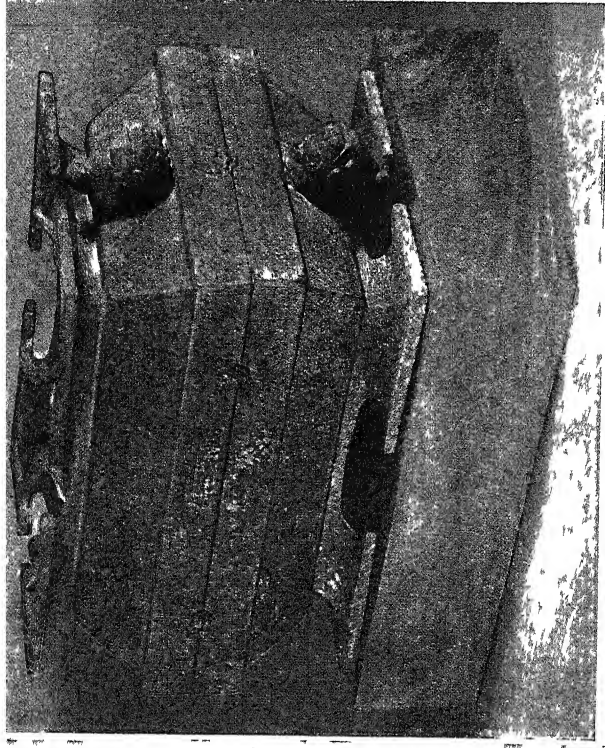
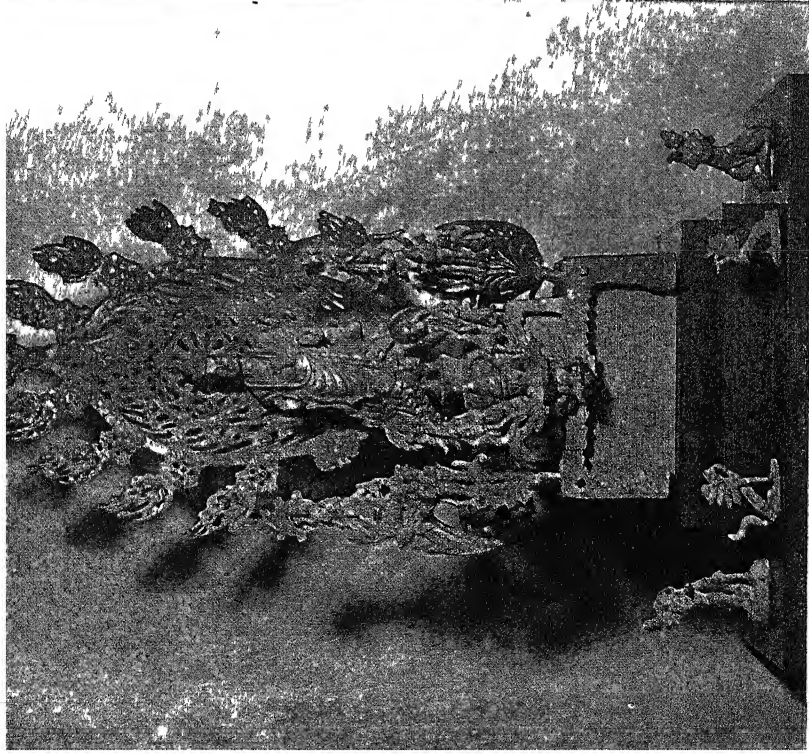
For a long time it was thought that paper was an invention of the Arabs of about the eighth century. But new information confirming ancient Chinese claims came to light during the Stein Expedition of the early nineteen hundreds. In a spur of the Great Wall Sir Aurel Stein found pure rag paper with the proven date A.D. 150. This is the oldest extant paper of the world. In that year it was officially announced to the Emperor by the Eunuch Ts'ai Lun that true paper had been made. It was made of tree bark, hemp, old rags, and fishing-nets. This, then, was the next development after the pure silk fibre paper upon which brush pens first wrote. Sir Aurel Stein also found paper of about A.D. 250 to 300 in Niya, Turkestan. Sven Hedin found paper in Loulan dated A.D. 264, while the earliest paper of Turfan was dated A.D. 399. The art of papermaking was beginning to move westward.

These first attempts at making paper have been thoroughly confirmed. At first paper consisted of a net of fibres. Gradually the Chinese experimented in sizing it with gypsum; then with glue or gelatin made from lichen. Then dry starch was used, and finally a starch paste. But the paper that the Arabs traded from the Chinese was a perfected paper.

Meanwhile, parallel in time with the development of paper, the process which began with seals and finally led to block printing was passing through stages that perfected it.

In very early times the usual way of verifying the receipt of an article was for the giver to break a strip of bamboo into two pieces—one for the recipient, the other for himself. The matching of the two fragments was proof of an accomplished deal. From this system of matching one thing against another to prove authenticity came the seal whose imprint could verify its origin. A seal in China held the significance of a signature in the West, and it is still so to-day. The earliest impressions of seals were made in soft clay, the later ones in ink—usually cinnabar ink, which is still used in this way.

Because errors in copying and interpretation were creeping into the records of the classics of Confucius and the other sages, it was necessary to find a more perfect way of preserving them. By cutting the writing into stone it was discovered that copies could be taken from these stones in direct rather than reversed form. A layer of felt was laid on the stone



above : CHINESE BRONZE CEREMONIAL DISH

left : CHINESE BRONZE ALTAR PIECE

*By courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago
and the "Encyclopaedia Britannica"*

Early Books

and pounded so as to fit into the depressions of the inscribed characters. Sheet after sheet could be printed swiftly and easily by laying it on this surface and rubbing it lightly with an inked pad or roller so that the copy came off with the characters left white and the blank space inked. Here then was authentic copy of the classics from the original stone records. It was not until the fourth or fifth century, when lampblack ink was discovered by one Wei Tang, that rubbings, as these copies were called, became common.

Ink was made of lampblack collected from the burning of lacquer, sesame, or other vegetable oil, or, more often, pine wood. The lampblack was mixed with glue and dried to a paste which was moulded into the shape of sticks, in which form it is still used in modern China. When writing is to be done the stick of ink is rubbed with water to make a liquid of the desired fluidity.

We now know that both paper and the earliest form of block printing—the rubbings from stone inscriptions—existed in China before the year 400. It is interesting to stop for a moment to see what was taking place in Europe at the time these developments were taking place in China.

During the Han dynasty (206 B.C.—A.D. 220) the Chinese developed the use of the brush pen. As Eastern art and learning progressed China was not unaware of the culture that was spreading in the West. It was the time of flourishing trade along the Silk Road. The arm of what is now the province of Kansu reached out towards the West, for along that trade route must have been cities now long forgotten. This north-western part of China developed most rapidly, for here were her contacts with the outside world and here lay the incentive to create. Rome was at the height of her glory. Great leaders were arising—Julius Cæsar and Marcus Aurelius, to be followed by Constantine. Buddhism was spreading in China as, roughly, Christianity was advancing in Europe.

The coming of Buddhism was to have an important part in the story of block printing because of charms which had spiritual value. Great was the demand for these religious charms, but there was no way of multiplying them sufficiently until paper and ink were discovered. With paper and ink, seals too could play their part. In the fifth century the first seals, inked with red cinnabar and stamped on paper, are recorded. Many imprints of such seals, representing the figure of Buddha, as well as charms made from the seals—which were the first

That Many may read and know

block prints—are extant. The word *yin*, which stands for ‘seal,’ also means to print, or printing.

Religious earnestness also proved an incentive to the development of block printing. There were charms, there were prayers, and there were the sayings of religious men—and copies of all were needed. The story of the discovery of the manuscript chamber in the Caves of One Thousand Buddhas is sufficient proof of this need.

In the arm of Kansu which stretches in the direction of the Silk Road, where, as we have said, there must have been cities and towns and a thriving life now long past, a Buddhist colony was started. The name of the place is Tun-huang. Here are many caves, some of them very large. These caves were evidently given over to the worship of Buddha and to the safe-keeping of things belonging to him. In two of the large ones are images of Buddha over ninety feet high. A stone inscription in one of the caves says the colony was begun in A.D. 366.

In 1900 a mendicant Taoist priest, as a pious undertaking, began collecting alms to redecorate some of the frescoes in the caves. He wanted to bring back the old magnificence of the place. In tearing down a crumbling fresco he found a part that had been laid on brick and not against the solid rock as was the rest. He removed the brick and behind it found a manuscript chamber.

Seven years later Sir Aurel Stein succeeded in getting access to this chamber. It was nine feet square and piled high with bundles of manuscripts. In each bundle, sewed up carefully in cloth, were a dozen or more manuscripts. There were eleven hundred and thirty such bundles, dating between the fifth and tenth centuries. It is probable that they were walled up there about A.D. 1035 and then, for reasons unknown, forgotten. The writing is done on paper, and the rolls are in perfect condition. Not all are in Chinese. There are many languages represented, among them excerpts from the Old Testament in Hebrew. This is not surprising if one remembers that Nestorian Christians, Arabs, Persians, Moslems, and Jews were in China by the eighth century.

It was among these written rolls that Sir Aurel Stein found the world’s oldest printed book. It is much more perfect than any of the block printing of Europe before the time of Gutenberg. The book, dated A.D. 868, is a copy of the “Diamond Sutra,” a popular section of the Buddhist scripture. The book consists of six sheets of text—one has only partial text because of a woodcut—which, joined together, make a roll sixteen feet long. At the very end, printed into the text, is the

Early Books

statement that the book was printed on May 11, 868, by Wang Chieh, "for general distribution, in order in deep reverence, to perpetuate the memory of his parents." Here, then, printing showed the way, not only to duplicate charms for the soul, but, as the "Diamond Sutra" itself says, to win merit for oneself by making known the sayings of Buddha.

The earliest existing block print, dated A.D. 770, comes from Japan. Yet we know that the Chinese were in advance of their neighbours in the development of block printing, for the Japanese copied the art from China. As we have seen, the oldest Chinese book printed on paper is dated A.D. 868. Perfection in block printing must have been achieved some time before the date of the Japanese print—long enough for the idea to have reached Japan and there, in turn, to have been perfected. True block printing, the next step after the use of charms, probably came to be used as a means of duplicating words about the time of Ming Huang (A.D. 712–756). This seems likely, for we know that the earliest rubbings now in existence are dated between A.D. 627 and 649, and that an intensive experimentation in the use of seals, rubbings, stamps, stencils, and textile prints was going on in Buddhist monasteries in the seventh century.

The Chinese were not yet ready to put printing to a wider use, so once again they turned to the classics. Feng Tao, Prime Minister about the middle of the tenth century, saw to the printing of a complete edition of the Confucian classics, presenting them to the Emperor in 953. This gift proved to be immensely important to China, for not only was it the first large-scale undertaking in block printing, it also made many copies of the classics available and again brought them to public attention, emphasized their worth, and contrasted their importance with that of the Buddhist scriptures, which had all but engulfed China for a time. It is said that this printing of the classics brought on a renaissance of Confucianism.

One of the beauties of block printing was that the original form of the calligrapher's writing was preserved. It was actually more important than ever that he perform his task well, for now it was duplicated and perpetuated and his name was cut on the block with the script itself. Thus he was remembered for his work.

The making of the block for printing represents hard work for both the calligrapher and the woodcarver. The copy is written on thin paper by the calligrapher. The block of wood that is to be used is coated with

That Many may read and know

a thin coating of paste on which the copy is superimposed, ink side down. This is done while the paste is still moist so that the surface will take the ink. The paper is then rubbed off, and the woodcarver cuts away the surface of all the wood surrounding the characters, which stand out in reverse. Sheets of paper, one at a time, may then be laid on the freshly inked words of the block, the paper smoothed down with a dry brush, and the printed sheets lifted carefully away. The words are duplicated exactly as written by the calligrapher. The process may be very swift when done by an experienced printer. Chinese books are printed from wooden blocks, usually the size of two pages. After the sheet is lifted from the block it is folded down the middle, the fold becoming the edge of the page, the other side of the folded sheet being sewn into the binding. The pages are therefore double.

* The Buddhist canon, the immense *Tripitaka* of one hundred and thirty thousand pages, was put into print. Between the tenth and eleventh centuries good dynastic histories were also published. The Sung dynasty (960-1279) was the peak period in Chinese printing history. It was the time most closely corresponding to the classical renaissance in Europe, although the Chinese rebirth came earlier.

Of much greater significance to the world as a whole was the invention of movable type. Pi Sheng is credited with making movable type of earthenware in the period 1041-49. The type was set in an iron form. Later his method was improved upon, both type and form being made of earthenware. Still later this method was again modified to type made of tin held in place by wires. Near the end of the fourteenth century the king of Korea built a foundry for the casting of bronze type. The earliest extant type from this foundry bears the date of 1409.

In all the work with movable type, however, particularly when this was metal, it was difficult to find the kind of ink required for perfect results. It was not until movable type was made of wood that the problem of ink was overcome, and with this method came success. A font of wood type dated 1300 was found at Tun-Huang by M. Pelliot. Experiments went on for a long time in different places, in Europe as well as in China. The first European block print was made in 1423; the first European block-printed book between 1440 and 1450. The earliest Korean movable type now existing is dated 1409. Gutenberg did not make his discovery until nearly fifty years later.

It is interesting to notice here the different factors that were contribut-



THE WORDS ARE DUPLICATED EXACTLY

That Many may read and know

ing to the development of printing in China and in Europe. In Europe, because of the alphabet, movable type—which was more practical than block printing—was a distinct advantage. In China, where there was no alphabet, the typesetter was confronted with tens of thousands of pieces of type which had to be assembled for printing. For China, then, there was not the same need for perfection in typography as in Europe, and even to-day block printing is common in China.

Though doubts may arise about the exact facts and their order in the development of printing, that paper was invented in China is undeniably true. For the first six hundred years of its history, China held a monopoly. For the next five hundred years the Arabs, importing paper from China, held a monopoly of it in the West. By the middle of the sixteenth century, Spanish and Dutch traders carried westward paper for walls—the origin of the wallpaper which is still a common covering for interiors.

The greatest significance in the whole story of the birth of books is that man could now speak as he had never spoken before. His world was suddenly without limit. His words could reach the boundaries of the world, and the message from those boundaries could come back to him.

Such beginnings in China set the rest of the world also to making books. Soon the real mingling of cultures began.



A PLACE IN WHICH TO THINK

Gardens

ALTHOUGH the making of gardens did not reach its perfection in China until the Sung dynasty—a thousand years after Confucius—it had its beginning in the days of the great philosophers.

Writings of two thousand five hundred years ago show that when Confucius and Lao-tze (another of the great sages) lived, men grew tired of wars and cities and longed for the quiet beauty of hills. Some men became recluses and shut themselves away. Others thought of ways of bringing mountains and lakes to themselves. Where it was not possible to create a great preserve, the use of suggestion, so very strong in the Oriental nature, made a single rock seem a crag, a pond seem a lake, and two trees seem a forest. The Chinese love symbolism and for this reason they have a particular liking for water-washed rocks. These rocks are smoothed and perforated by currents and coloured by deposits—and they record enormous age. Very early in the story of gardening they were hunted and cherished as garden decorations.

A Place in which to think

Because many of the great scholars were officials and men of great wealth, they were able to do more than suggest landscape and waterfall and lake. They developed tremendous estates where landscaping was undertaken on an enormous scale. If a hill was lacking, it was constructed by the work of thousands of coolies. Where a lake was wanting, a lake was dug. If a rocky cliff was necessary, the rocks were heaved from distant mountain sides and dragged and carried by straining workmen to the garden, where they were assembled to resemble nature. A favourite theme for arrangement of lakes and artificial islands was that of the imaginary 'Isles of the Immortals,' which were supposed to lie in the Eastern Ocean and to be the home of the Blessed Beings. Besides great gardens, many officials owned hunting-preserves which were kept stocked with birds and animals.

To-day the visitor to the Orient might be disappointed by what he found of existing Chinese gardens, though he would be enchanted with the gardening art of Japan. The gardens of China are apt to seem stereotyped and stiff, without the minute perfection of those of the Japanese, and totally lacking in their grace. It is startling to discover that the origin of the Japanese garden is Chinese. While gardening in China degenerated as it grew more and more stylized, Japan tended to preserve what she had learned. It is believed that the first great Japanese gardens were of direct Chinese origin carried out by the Chinese, and in Japan there are still evidences of gardens laid out by the Chinese landscape artists. The evolution of gardens in China and their continued original style in Japan is paralleled, we may say, by the Japanese house and Japanese style of dress. These are both strongly suggestive of the T'ang period in China, whence they probably came.

Landscape, artificially constructed, was the theme of the Chinese garden. In the given space, natural beauties were brought together in what was thought to be proper relation to one another. In the sixth century the Emperor Yang Ti began building a park more than sixty miles in circumference, comprising the 'Five Lakes and Four Seas.' In the centre of each lake was an island which held arbours and pleasure pavilions. There were brightly coloured barges with dragonhead prows for parties on the lakes. To the court of this Emperor came the first official embassy from Japan. Up to this time Japan had been a primitive country, little concerned with artificial gardens. Bronze swords and mirrors had sometimes been brought back after raids on China's coast, and from somewhere had come reports of learning and art among the

Gardens

Chinese. And so Japan sent to discover the truth about this great country which lay west of the Eastern Island People. Soon after the return of this Japanese embassy the ancient chronicles mention the first landscape garden built in Japan. Much had been seen and learned.

In the year 612 there went to Japan, it is said, a man from Korea. His face was blotched with white (perhaps a leper) and his appearance was so unpleasing that the Japanese threatened to banish him to a distant island. The Korean was, however, a man of humour. He said that if they were going to banish him because of his looks, they should banish also all their spotted cattle. He suggested, also, that as he knew how to make 'mountain shapes' they could ill afford to lose him.

At once they understood that this man knew how to construct the artificial rocky hillocks used in Chinese gardens—like those in the great Chinese capital itself. He was ordered to construct a hillock and a Chinese bridge in the southern courtyard of the Imperial Palace. This he did. The ancient chronicle thereafter refers to this man as the Ugly Artisan. There is later mention of another garden with a rocky island perhaps built by this same man.

The oldest-known garden remnant in either Japan or China, perhaps, in the world, is one near Kyoto, Japan. It is believed to date back to the T'ang period of Chinese history, about A.D. 665, the time of Japan's first great interest in Chinese garden art. Some rocks are half buried in the earth. One group of three still shows definite artistic arrangement—the occult balance based on the triangle whose lines, when used in flower arrangement, are called Heaven, Earth, and Man. The grouping of these stones, done at a time when Japan herself had undertaken very little original work, suggests that the skill displayed may have come directly from China. Possibly the work was done by descendants of the Ugly Artisan himself, for he had been dead only a few years when the garden was built.

The 'Five Lakes and Four Seas' of Yang Ti's park indicate that ponds were used in the planning of great gardens. A beautiful specimen still remains in the Forbidden City in Peiping. Although it is only some five hundred years old, it still carries out the older theme.

As the art of gardening advanced towards its highest point in the Sung dynasty, Japan continued to follow it. Perspective grew more important. It was as though the landscape-maker tried to bring out the inner quality of mountains, trees, and rocks. He used symbolism many times. He seemed to achieve the impression of distance through

A Place in which to think

suggestion, creating the effect of tremendous size in limited space. Cascades, islands, lake borders, and hillocks were all used in miniature. One of the very famous gardens of this time was made by the Sung emperor, Ken Yu, in the capital, Kaifeng. It was destroyed later during the Mongol invasion, but when Hangchow in the south was established as the new capital, the making of gardens went on there.

All this is the story of Chinese gardens from their beginning to their point of highest development. But the story most familiar to those of the West is that told on Willow ware, whether in Wedgwood or cheaper quality. The picture there is crude and unbelievable except as the work of a warped imagination, yet it came from the gardens that bordered West Lake in Hangchow centuries ago—and still do so, patterned as they are after the ancient models.

From earliest times pavilions and gardens have crowded the shore of West Lake. The tip-tilted corners of the roofs are reflected in the still water, shrouded with weeping willows, and touched with a dozen colours of azure, turquoise, and Chinese red as the sun glistens on the porcelain tiles. A causeway built in the ninth century, made up of half-moon bridges, runs beneath overhanging trees. It was built by a governor of the province, himself a poet and garden-maker.

The present gardens round West Lake are not old. Nothing of the Sung dynasty gardens is left. Yet Chinese garden art is not dead. There remains in the Chinese a love of beautiful stone, of flowing water, of berried-shrubs, of up-thrusting branches of bamboo, of flowers with their fragrance—flowers that are more than flowers, for they portend something. The sweet wild plum is winter, opening waxy-white on a barren stem. The peony is spring, sending its blood-red buds up through the half-frozen earth and then opening its blossoms in a lavish glory. The lotus, swimming in the waters of a sun-warmed pond, its roots feeding from the dark loam of the bottom, its blossoms the symbol of Buddha and Nirvana, is summer. The chrysanthemum, unbelievably showy and resplendent, or small and compact and fragrant, the flavouring for a cup of tea, and hardy and long-lasting, is autumn. There are flowers for each month as well.

A visitor, walking for long miles through the country, may bring a branch of peach blossoms for your china vase. An old gentleman may bring a narcissus bulb and tell you carefully how many stalks of flowers it is to have, for it was prepared to bear so many. A child from the farm beyond your gate will bring a spray of jasmine, or *Camellia*

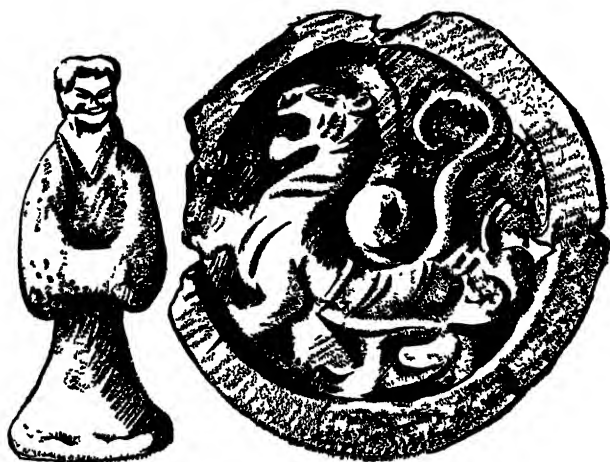


THE IMPRESSION OF DISTANCE THROUGH SUGGESTION

A Place in which to think

japonica, from his little grove, saying shyly that the rest are being pulled to send to market. . . . You will have seen them lying carefully in a flat, dew-moist basket, ready, with tiny bamboo pins, to be thrust next the knot of a woman's hair. . . . An old friend may bring you an orchid—a Chinese orchid, not showy, but a spike of greenish, lemon-yellow flowers, delectably fragrant, with slender, grass-like leaves.

To the Chinese the West is indebted not only for the beginnings of gardens—the effort to bring home Nature at her best—but also for many of the favourite flowers which she thinks of as her own. Many years later, when China and things Chinese became the rage, these flowers were carried westward.



THE ART OF THE MEN OF HAN

Art of Action

ONE of China's greatest emperors, Shih Huang-ti, unified China more perfectly than ever before in her history. To protect her from invaders he built the famous Great Wall along her northern borders. Under Wu Ti, China's armies went out to conquer. Cavalry raids reached as far as Ferghana, on the threshold of Iran and India. Pan Ch'ao crushed the Huns, took control of the Gobi Desert, and reached the Pamirs. The annals of the Han dynasty tell this great story of a militant China with the swing of an epic, for it was the epic period of Chinese history.

The great changes in China herself brought great changes in her art. Her art expresses the heart of a people. Two new developments stand out—a simplification of decoration, and the beginning of sculptured forms.

Decoration became so simple as to be almost severe, often carried out in one plane in linear style. Mirrors made of polished bronze were decorated on the back with geometrical lines or concentric circles—representations of the stars surrounding a central portion known as the lands of the Immortals, familiar in the planning of lakes in gardens. Another type is the Mirror of Eight Bows, with a pattern of fine lines broken at regular intervals by whorls, which in turn enclosed an octagonal star. The whole effect is cool, severe, and restrained. Sometimes animals appear on the fields of the mirrors, usually symbolizing the

The Art of the Men of Han

four points of the compass—the green dragon of the East, the white tiger of the West, the red bird of the South, and the black tortoise of the North.

Han period vases, plates, and drums also were almost bare. Again the decoration is linear. Sometimes, instead of the heavy relief of the Chou dynasty work, there are narrow bands in shallow relief depicting geometrical, animal, or vegetable motifs. More startling still is the beginning of the use of scenes depicting men and animals in relation to the world around them, such as a leopard hunt, or a buffalo hunt, a buffalo at bay turning on the huntsman.

Action describes the decoration of the Han period more perfectly than any other term. Before this, picturization had been massive with detail. Here the very simplicity with which the story is told brings a feeling of swift movement.

This impression is further carried out in their work in bronze. Elongated bodies, fibulae, originally intended as hooks for hanging coats, or as buckles for robes, but later used in many other ways, were made up of a single conventionalized dragon curved in the shape of the letter *s*, or of two interlaced dragons. They were finely cut in lace-like open-work, or of solid metal decorated with inlays of contrasting metals. Vases were inlaid with motifs similar to those of the fibulae.

Among the crude sculptures of the early Chou dynasty are ten stone drums inscribed with odes telling of imperial hunting and fishing expeditions (probably of the time of Ch'eng Wang, 1115-1079 B.C.), mural decorations in relief, and representations of dragons and phoenixes. But in the Han dynasty a much finer sculpture is found in jade. There is the jade fish, a plaque in the shape of a tiger, the head of a hind showing simplicity, swiftness of contour, and candour. But the need for imperishability brought a further advance.

The funerary relief work of the Han, made of stone found in Shantung and Honan provinces, set stone art forward by great steps. They are actually copies of paintings set in the stone for the benefit of the dead. These reliefs are carried out in a linear way, typical of the bronze work. Sometimes the background is cut away, leaving the figures standing out on the plane surface; sometimes the figures are very slightly raised against the background in shallow relief. These often depict mythological characters—gods and imaginary animals, such as centaurs and winged beasts. It is interesting to see that where these fantastic spirit beings are pictured as swooping to touch the ground their extremities



SHIH HUANG-TI BUILT THE GREAT WALL

The Art of the Men of Han

take the form of human feet, but where they are in mid-air they still keep their wings and serpents' tails. Those which travel in the medium of the air belong to a whole group known as 'the kingdom of the air.' There are chariots drawn by winged horses and swirling clouds and winged gnomes. The clouds themselves seem alive.

The reliefs picturing 'the kingdom of water' represent a sovereign drawn in a car manned by fishes, with a swarm of frogs and tortoises and water-rats crowding the waves. Water-animals are armed with human implements of war. Men ride on fish and are guarded by genii whose bodies end in fishes' tails.

'The kingdom of wind and storm' pictures the Wind God in his chariot drawn by fantastic quadrupeds. There is the God of Thunder with his hammer and his drum. Goddesses race past 'banishing cords of rain which lash like a whip.' Here is more action—action so intense that it is impossible to describe it. Seeing the stone copies of Han paintings, one is made to realize how great is the loss of that art to the world.

The only sample of Han painting that is preserved in its original form are some bricks taken from a tomb near Honan-fu. These bear a painting of the first century: a tiger on a leash, an ensemble showing the court of a prince, a group of women, some fishermen—all as full of vigour as the stone reliefs.

A development of stone sculpture is that found in the Shen pillars in Szechuen. Here are sweeping red birds, a wild funeral cavalcade, a barbarian archer. These are the direct expression of art—not copies of paintings—and the beginning of sculpture as a medium of expression in China.

Sculpture of the Han period expressed itself even more freely in the terra cottas and glazed ware. For pottery was not an adjunct to sculpture but *was* sculpture. Funeral statuettes accompanied the dead into the other world. These represent people and animals and all that went to make up the Chinese life of the time. Houses, wells, household utensils, and furniture were all moulded as simply as possible from clay. Because they are simplified they retain their strongest characteristics—the attitude, or gestures, exaggerated almost to caricature. The figurines are scarcely more than dummies, and yet even they have grace and charm. Novices in flowing robes show reserve and modesty, almost shyness, in their chubby faces. Animals are particularly charming—round, with almost no detail, yet with very definite expression.

What happened to produce this sudden freeing of the Chinese artistic

Art of Action

mind in the Han dynasty? China had become a nation. But even more than this, from the artistic point of view, China had pushed out and begun to assimilate the artistic expression of other peoples.

The reliefs definitely suggest Greek influence. It was the time when the Greco-Roman artists were painting the frescoes at Miran to the south of Lobnor. They were supposed to be the work of one Tita, perhaps an Indianized form of the name Titus. Probably no one will say definitely that China was trying to use the Greco-Roman canon of art. Rather it was the natural assimilation of new ideas that is the beginning of interchange of cultures.

But the vast distances of India lay between China and Greece and Rome. From India came a very strong influence on Chinese thought and art. This was true in the story of printing. In direct contrast with the philosophies of Confucius and the other sages of the period in which he lived came Buddhism with its wealth of new gods, new heavens, and new hells. With it came new artistic traditions and techniques that were to touch and change the life of the Chinese.



BUDDHIST GOTHIC

Meditative Art

FOR four centuries the Han dynasty kept China unified. Then revolt broke it into three parts—the Wei in the north, the Wu in the south, and the remainder of the Han in the west. These are known as the Three Kingdoms.

With the country weakened by division, invasion was sure to come. The Mongols were the invaders. China was now broken and susceptible to influences from outside.

Across the Gobi Desert had come the out-reaching power of Greece and Rome and Persia. Then came Buddhism, stronger than any other influence that had come. Yet even it was not to stay intact, but was to merge with the religion and history and art of China herself to bring about a new artistic ideal often called 'Buddhist Gothic.'

The sculpture of this period shows the long, flowing lines, the elongated bodies, and quiet, passive faces which suggest the term Gothic. Mysticism makes its appearance in the seated Buddhas and bodhisattvas. The figures become so simple, almost negligible, that only the calm faces seem left to stare down at one with an inner, soul-resting expression. China is using beauty for a purpose, to draw man's soul nearer to nirvana, or the feelingless, desireless state.

Best loved among many other figures is that of the Goddess of Mercy,



AN INDICATION OF BUDDHIST INFLUENCE IS THE PAGODA

Buddhist Gothic

Kuan Yin, who nearly always is represented gesturing with infinite compassion towards those who worship her or gaze at her with mute admiration or calming meditation.

The rugged, active sculpture of the Han now changes to express the spirit of Buddhism. This new sculpture, perfect in minute details, is comparable in many ways to that of Reims and Amiens and Notre-Dame. The religious influence in Chinese art made it more nearly universal than any preceding influence.

Another indication of Buddhist influence in China is the pagoda. Pagodas themselves are Chinese, but they developed from the Indian *stupa*, which was a building used for the housing of sacred relics. These towers, always of an uneven number of stories, since Buddhism likes odd rather than even numbers, may be anything from a few stories up to three hundred and sixty feet high. They may be octagonal, hexagonal, or square. Most often they are built of brick or stone. A few, dating from between the tenth and fourteenth centuries, are made of iron, and a very famous one near Peiping is known as the Jade Pagoda. Although their first connexion was with Buddhism, they came in time to have to do with the good or bad fortune—the *feng-hsui* or 'wind and water'—of a locality. Some of the most bitter incidents between Westerners and Chinese have been related to this question of disturbing the 'wind and water' of a place, the Westerner disregarding what to him seems pure superstition.

Whatever their historical or mystical importance, to the artist the pagoda has infinite appeal. Standing on a bare, windswept hill-top overlooking an expanse of yellow river; tucked into the shelter of a rocky cliff high in the mountains; or guarding a narrow street crowded with milling life, pagodas stand for a quality of the Chinese people. It is a quality hard to describe, for it is their ability to appreciate beauty, not as something set apart, but as something which goes to make up life itself—a bringing into life of religion, mysticism, and grace. Like Chinese democracy, the Chinese sense of beauty is not an ideal. It is a part of living.



SHAPES OF THINGS |AS THEY ARE

Sculpture

DURING the T'ang dynasty—A.D. 618-907—united China attained perhaps the greatest art of her history. China reached out farther and farther and exchanged embassies with her neighbours. And because they were Buddhist the T'ang period is one of Chinese Buddhist history.

Sculpture was one way in which China expressed herself. It was the age of Chinese sculpture, yet not of great sculptors. Few pieces bear any individual's name. They are anonymous. They are not the work of artists but of artisans. But this is not important, because these figures still express the feeling and the thought and the ability of the Chinese people, more perfectly, perhaps, than if they had been done by a few outstanding men.

For the first time in her history China was speaking in terms that the West could and still can understand fully. Before this period the quality of her art most often eludes the western mind. T'ang sculpture

Shapes of Things as they are

is now understandable because it is done in western terms. It is artistic realism.

The theme of T'ang art is ordinary living beings. Bronze, stone, iron, and pottery are all mediums through which the workman speaks. He speaks most eloquently of all when he depicts plain people. Warriors draw their swords; musicians, female attendants, dancing girls, and ladies-in-waiting—they all come to life to charm us. While there are still a host of religious figurines, they are so realistic as to be muscular, massive, violent, or exaggerated. Drapery no longer conceals the form but reveals it. Often the figures have grandeur. Many are only busts—heads of monks, clean-shaven, full of wrinkles—suggesting the busts of Rome.

It is an art of heroic deeds delighting in war scenes and animal life. The fibulae of an earlier age come to life and stand on their feet, prancing and rearing. Horses are a favourite subject. They are never elegant or ambling. They are charging or galloping. Camels seem to walk with a rhythmic swing. Lions tear lambs to pieces. Brutality is there.

Now, for the first time, we see China's pictures of what other peoples seemed to her, and the representations delight us. For years Tartars, Mongols, Persians, and Indians had pressed in from the North and West. The sea, which until now had stood as a limitless barrier, except for a few pirates, envoys, or crusading missionaries, was becoming a pathway for ships, which, though they headed for other lands, were often wrecked on her shores.

Among the sculptures are found a model of a Polynesian visitor to the south coast, perfect in every detail—curly hair, full features, half-naked body; a Persian-Arabian caravan traveller—grizzled, dark, swathed against the heat of the Gobi desert; and a Turko-Iranian, bearded and turbaned.

Decorations of the T'ang period have the same realism as have the sculptures. No longer are there geometrical designs and symbolisms. Instead there are vines and bunches of grapes, peonies, foxes, bears, and lions.

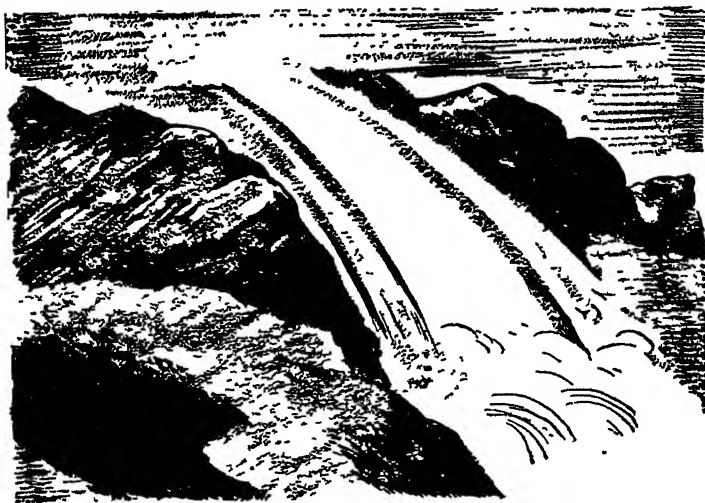
Glazed pottery achieved perfection in this age. The beginnings of porcelain date from this period, but it did not become important to the West until later, although it was exported as far afield as Turkestan in the ninth century. Glazes were at first chiefly green; then yellow, manganese purple, and blue began to appear, but the finest remained green and an orange-yellow bordering on brown. The same realism



THEY ARE NEVER ELEGANT OR AMBLING

Shapes of Things as they are

that marks all the art of the period shows itself in an almost brutal use of colour, in contrasts which for many centuries seemed crude. To-day, the ultra-modern period of Western culture again approves of these colour combinations. The decoration is simple and strong, for the real beauty of T'ang pottery lies in form and colour rather than in decorative design. Here, as in the sculpture, men of China seem to be saying, "These are things as they are."



T'ANG PAINTING

Beauty Expressed

When the hand, the eye, and the mind arrive together,
There, under the brush, the spirit is expressed.

T'ang Painting

CHINESE painting is as old as the Chinese calligrapher's brush-pen. The high development of Chinese writing is one of the reasons why painting became one of the greatest arts of China. The technique of brush-using existed. It did not have to be discovered. The art of writing was a scholar's art, while the use of the brush for painting was for a long time considered the work of a hired artisan. Even a portrait painter had no social standing.

The Emperor T'at Chung of the T'ang dynasty once had a boating party on the palace lake. A flock of beautiful birds attracted his notice and he asked his guests to write poems celebrating the occasion while he sent for the artist Yen Li-peng to paint the birds in colour. Yen, who was an official of some rank, hurried to the palace as soon as the order reached him, knelt by the lake shore, and mixed his paints. While he was doing this he looked up and saw the men of the boating party sitting at ease, and was overcome with shame. When he went home he said to his sons, "I have pursued a scholarly life ever since my boy-

T'ang Painting

hood. But now I am appreciated only through my paintings and am treated on the same level as the servants and hired labourers. I want you never to learn my art."

But painting in China had to come to its place as one of the great arts. It did so in two ways—through its religious use in Buddhism, and through literature.

Buddhism brought to China not only the pagoda but many temples and monasteries which, though Chinese in outward form, inside were covered with murals depicting episodes in the life of Buddha or scenes from the Buddhist scriptures. Though painted by professional decorators, only men of learning were able to explain the meaning of these pictures. As Buddhism reached the most influential families of China, Chinese Buddhist art came to be esteemed. Talented artists were invited to undertake religious murals for great temples and monasteries.

In the fifth century the school of Shan Shui—"Mountain and Water"—began. These were painters and poets; poets who wrote of free nature—the feeling of flowing streams, waterfalls, mists, snow, rugged rocks, falling leaves; painters who portrayed Chinese landscape with the same feeling as the poets.

"There is poetry in his painting and painting in his poetry," was said of the poet Wang Wei, a poet-painter of the T'ang dynasty. The relation between the two was so close that one seemed dependent upon the other.

Typical of Chinese painters, Wang Wei was both a realist and a master of exuberant imagination. He painted a scene called *Yu An lying in a Hut during a Snowfall*. A banana-tree waves handsomely in the midst of the snowstorm. Some people complained that in the same pictures he made use of flowers blooming at different seasons. Yet when he came to explain his purpose each seemed to have its place in the painting, so bold and full was the imaginative power of Wang Wei.

Wang Wei, however, is most famous for his monochromes. Monochrome painting in Chinese art has none of the lifelessness of the same type of art elsewhere. The Chinese artist used Chinese ink. A Chinese critic says:

Ink applied meaninglessly to silk in a monotonous manner is called dead ink; that appearing distinctly . . . is called living ink. . . . The natural aspect of an object can be beautifully conveyed by ink-colour only if one knows how to produce the required shades. . . . In ink sketches the brush is the captain and the ink is lieutenant, but in coloured painting, colours are the master and the brush the servant.



“PROJECT ITS SHADOW ON A PIECE OF SILK”

T'ang Painting

In other words, the mastery of ink painting is rarer than that of colour painting.

Wang Wei had a friend named Han Kan. He painted horses, the sturdy steeds who brought tribute to the imperial court from the peoples of the north and west. Painted on silk or paper, he is the counterpart of the sculptured horses so full of action and vigour, belonging to the same period.

The greatest painter of the T'ang dynasty, and some say of China, was Wu Tao-Tzu. We are told that he was once sent by the Emperor to paint the scenery of a certain river. He went, but when he came back he brought nothing. When asked about it he said, "I have it all in my heart." Like other Chinese painters, he made no preliminary sketches. Painting done on silk could not be erased or altered. A stroke of the brush once there was there for ever. For this reason an artist first thought carefully of the picture he was to paint, preparing himself mentally for the undertaking, much as a poet meditates on the thought he wishes to express. "Those who study bamboo painting take a stalk of bamboo and on a moonlit night project its shadow on a piece of silk on a wall; the true form is thus brought out," says a study of the art of painting by Kuo Hsi. The essence had to be discovered before work could begin, for the Chinese artist painted not what the eye saw but that which the heart felt—perhaps a truer art than that of the West.

Wu Tao-Tzu seemed able to extract this essence, for he added glory to the court of the great emperor, Ming Huang. He decorated a wall for the Emperor. It is said that as the two of them, the painter and the monarch, stood before it, the artist clapped his hands, a cave in the picture opened, and the artist passed through. Before the Emperor could accept his invitation to follow, the cave closed and the artist disappeared for ever. This story is intended to describe the realism that Wu Tao-Tzu imparted in his work.

Wu Tao-Tzu was a master painter of landscapes. Realist though he was, he yet used suggestion. Chinese landscapes are pre-eminent in the landscape work of the world in their impression of infinite horizons, the appearance of mountains beyond mountains, melting into remote sky. In this same period we hear of men who could give the effect of ten thousand miles of country on a fan—an expression of description which the Chinese love. Fan painting became an art. Many were the paintings on fans never used as such but preserved for their beauty.

As in all Chinese art (except for the development in T'ang sculpture



POTTERY HORSE, T'ANG DYNASTY

By courtesy of Delos Chappell and the "Encyclopædia Britannica"

Beauty Expressed

and pottery already described), symbolism is strong in Chinese painting. Each of the five colours has its associations, which seem to the Western mind quite tiresome and meaningless but are vital and important to the Chinese. To the masters of the West, painting has ever been the representation of things as they are. Paintings are considered part of the beauty which decorates a building or a room. But to the Chinese, painting is a spiritual experience.

Again and again Chinese artists refused to sell their works. Admirers brought them pieces of silk to be painted upon, in the hope that when the mood came upon them they would relent. One of the artists grew so tired of the importunity of his admirers that he had gift silk sewn to make stockings for himself. The aching longing to express the feeling of beauty can be found in the words of a Chinese poet: "Oh, that with this blossoming plum branch I could offer the song with which this morning it was quivering."



“ IDLERS OF THE BAMBOO BROOK ”

T'ang Poetry

POETRY brought the release of painting in the time of the T'ang dynasty. Poetry itself was set free, for before this time rhyme and length of line had been emphasized; now tone, style, and originality were prized. Poetry dared great things, for now it produced words for popular tunes to be used by entertainers and dancing girls. The lines could be irregular, have more variety of melody, tell of battle, or describe the emotions aroused by a beautiful landscape, the meeting and parting of friends, a ruin, the song of a bird, or the moonlight.

When he was ten years old the poet Li Po wrote of the firefly:

Rain cannot quench thy lantern's light,
Wind makes it shine more bright;
Oh, why not fly to heaven afar,
And twinkle near the moon—a star?

Li Po and his friend, Tu Fu, were the most famous poets of the dynasty. Both belonged to the company known as the 'Eight Immortals of the Wine Cup,' for both loved wine too well.

T'ang Poetry

Li Po, who is known not only as the greatest poet of the T'ang period, but also of all Chinese history, was most of his life a wanderer. For a time he lived in the mountains with a group which called itself 'Six Idlers of the Bamboo Brook.' Li Po was a Bohemian by nature. He never succeeded in obtaining what all Chinese men of learning aspired to—a good official position. He spent three years at the court of the Emperor, where he was known as the 'banished angel' because he had previously lived in mountain seclusion. Because he could dash off poems to commemorate special events he soon became the pet of the court. On one occasion when he was sent for, he appeared supported by two of the court eunuchs. "Please, your Majesty," he said, "I have been drinking with the Prince and he has made me drunk, but I will do my best." Thereupon two ladies of the court held a pink silk screen in front of him and in a very short time he had written off ten eight-line stanzas describing the palace favourite. This beauty was Yang Kuei-fei, one of the most famous of Chinese women, about whom many poems were written and of whom many paintings were made. She was to cause trouble for Li Po, who became involved in intrigues and was forced to set out on his wanderings again. He wrote sadly:

My whitening hair would make a long, long rope,
Yet would not fathom all my depth of woe.

But he escaped from woe in his verse and led others to do the same. He was considered master of the form known as short-stop. Thus he writes:

The birds have all flown to their roosts in the tree,
The last cloud has just floated lazily by;
But we never tire of each other, not we,
As we sit here together—the mountains and I.

The legend goes, however, that one night after too much drink he sought escape too realistically. Leaning from the side of the boat in which he drifted, he tried to embrace the reflection of the moon and so was drowned. Perhaps in his mind there still lay the remembrance of the words which he had written only a short while before:

An arbour of flowers
and a kettle of wine;
Alas! In the bowers
no companion is mine.

"Idlers of the Bamboo Brook"

Then the moon sheds her rays
on my goblet and me,
And my shadow betrays
we're a party of three.

Though the moon cannot swallow
her share of the grog,
And my shadow must follow
wherever I jog—
Yet their friendship I'll borrow
and gaily carouse,
And laugh away sorrow
while springtime allows.

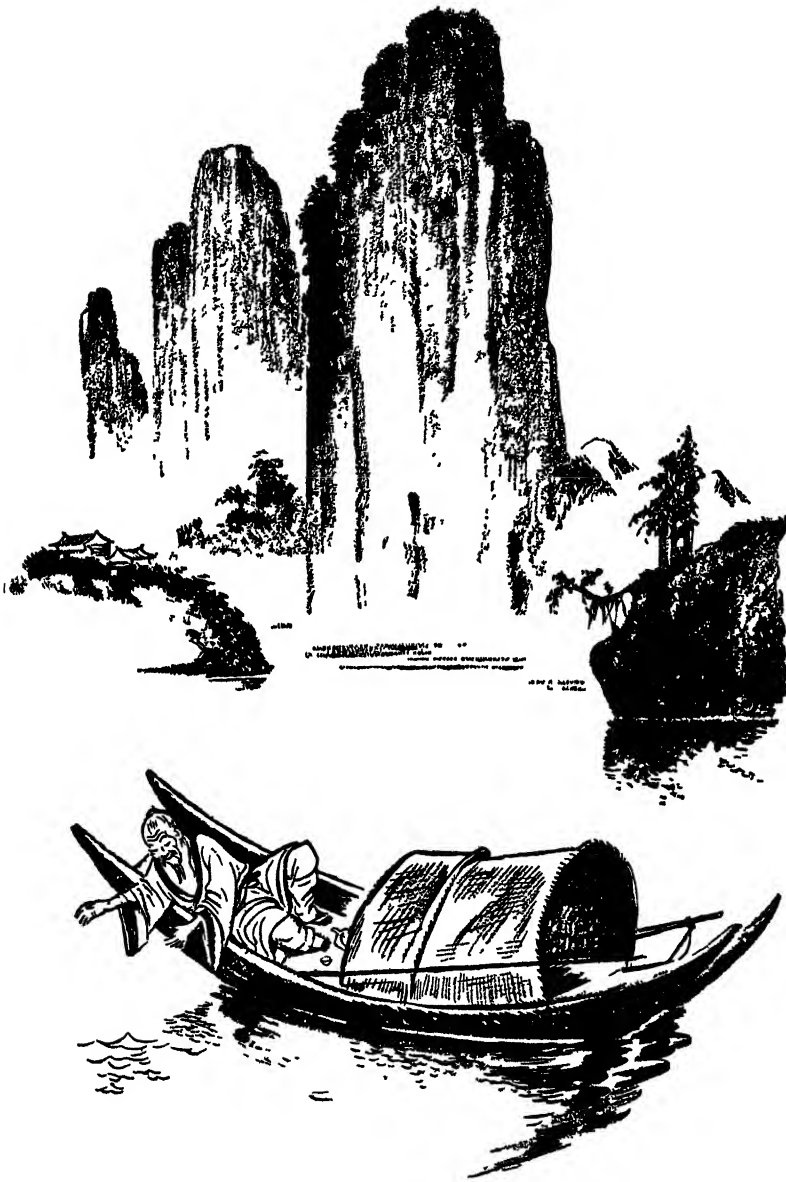
See the moon, how she glances
response to my song;
See my shadow—it dances
so lightly along!
While sober I feel
you are both my good friends;
When drunken I reel,
our companionship ends.

But we'll soon have a greeting
without a good-bye,
At our next merry meeting
away in the sky.

Tu Fu was a friend of Li Po's. For years he had been at the imperial court, for, although he had failed at the examinations, he had finally been given an official post. Unlike Li Po, hardship had embittered him. He had failed in the examinations; he was disillusioned at the court; because of civil wars he was separated from his family and some of his children had died of starvation. It was impossible for him to find escape even in the poetry he loved.

He wrote carefully and realistically with none of the lyric freedom of his friend. There is a touch of sadness in what he writes:

Alone I wandered o'er the hills
to seek the hermit's den,
While sounds of chopping rang around
the forest's leafy glen.



HE TRIED TO EMBRACE THE REFLECTION OF THE MOON

“Idlers of the Bamboo Brook”

I passed on ice across the brook
which had not ceased to freeze,
As the slanting rays of afternoon
shot sparkling through the trees.

I found he [the hermit] did not joy to gloat
o'er fetid wealth at night,
But far from tant, to watch the deer
in the golden morning light. . . .
My mind was clear at coming;
but now I've lost my guide,
And rudderless my little bark
is drifting with the tide.

It is never fair to Chinese poetry to quote it in translation. It takes many words to express the terse, suggestive Chinese characters. It is difficult to match the Chinese rhythm which is peculiarly musical because of the tone and inflection. These are as much a part of the spoken word as each stroke is of the written word. In China poetry is the essence of meaning and feeling.



PORCELAIN BEAUTY

Finest Clay

AN art begun in the T'ang and Sung dynasties—a minor art at first—became that by which China was best known throughout the world.

Porcelain was invented in China. The European name *chinaware* places it, as does the Persian *chini*. In the eighth and ninth centuries Arab trade with China in this ware flourished. There were Moham-medan colonies in Canton and these exported porcelain. An Arabian traveller, Soleyman, writes:

They have in China a very fine clay with which they make vases as trans-parent as glass; water is seen through them.

Arabs were acquainted with glass, so they would not easily be confused by the material of which these vases were made.

During the Sung dynasty (960-1279) 'crackled' glazes on porcelain were invented, or discovered. These are usually pale in shade and may be creamy-brown, dove-grey, or bluish-green in colour. Generally speaking, deliberate crackle in glazes is caused by the use of minerals which make the glossy surface contract in excess of the clay shape beneath. Kuan Yao and Ko Yao crackled glazes are among the most beautiful examples of this type of ware.

Porcelain Beauty

The Chinese word for pottery is *t'ao*, originally the character for kiln. Earthenware is *wa*—in its pictogram form a rounded tile. The story of ceramics in China is a long one, beginning, as we have seen, as the earliest artistic expression of the Chinese people. Other expressions came, reached their peak, assumed more commonplace positions, or maintained their even quality. But porcelain, as a development of the ceramics, seems to have had its roots in the time of the early jades. Chinese fondness for jade, although depending upon no single quality, was closely connected with their feeling that there was a near spiritual beauty in the substance itself, regardless of how it was prepared for use. One has only to see the way a Chinese who appreciates the value of jade holds the beautiful stone in his hand, to know that this is true. He holds it reverently, lovingly, almost sensuously, as though a living quality lay in the substance itself.

Monochrome pieces of Sung porcelain have the quality of jade. There are pure white pieces and there are pale-green pieces, known as Celadon. These are particularly famous. There are dove-grey, lavender, crushed strawberry, mottled crimson, blue, red, plum-coloured varieties of porcelain, and each is beautiful. Sometimes great irregular splashes of colour break the uniformity of shade. This is called 'flashed' ware.

Because of their lack of decoration, all the varieties stress the quality of the material itself, precisely as do the early jades. The substance seems like a caress to the touch. Up to this time pottery had been beautiful, but during the Sung dynasty it became like living flesh with the suggestion of human grace and appeal. In this period pottery was at its purest, the most expressive of its material. Not all T'ang and Sung porcelain is plain, however, some, such as the Ting ware, having designs or figures freely engraved or moulded in relief.

The Ming development of porcelain was primarily due to a Moham-medan invasion of thought and feeling, and blue-and-white and polychrome enamels were the outcome of a changed attitude towards life, originating from Court orders to craftsmen. Porcelain began to be used for more and more purposes—from vases to tiles, and from ink-stands to sweetmeat boxes.

The most celebrated factory of the Ming period (1368–1644) was in Ching-te-Chen, in the province of Kiangsi. This was the imperial factory and was named after a Sung ruler, Ching-te. Pieces made at this place are especially noted for their glazes. In some the colours were



THE MANCHUS TRIED TO CARRY ON THE TRADITIONS

Porcelain Beauty

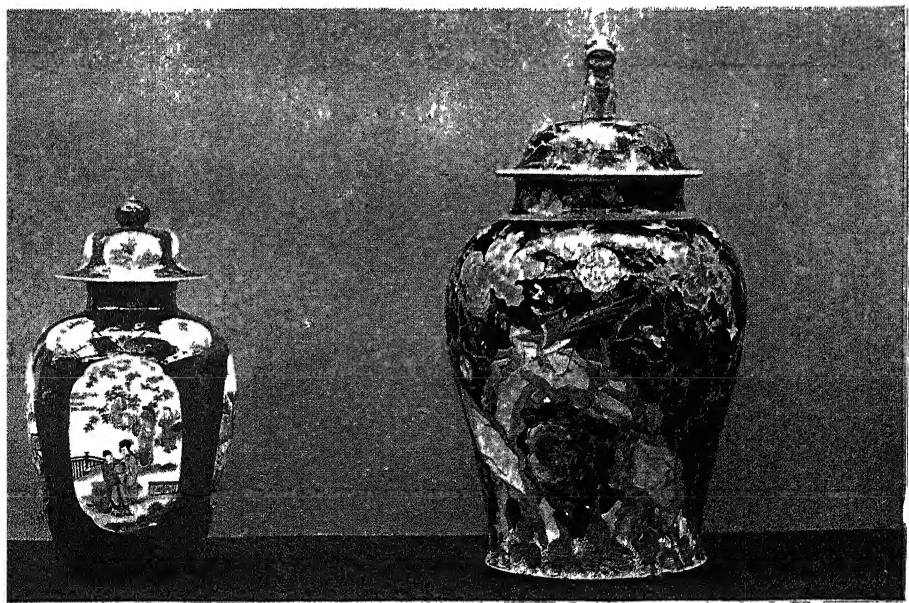
painted on the 'biscuit' beneath the glaze; others had many-coloured glazes decorated with enamels. The underglaze painting was in cobalt blue or iron brown, the overglaze enamels, fired again at a low temperature, supplied the bright colours. Sometimes the enamelled designs were enclosed by narrow raised edges: such ware was known as cloisonné enamel. The first painted pieces were blue on white, varying from rich cobalt—the purest colour being obtained from abroad, at great cost, and mixed with native blues—to lighter shades. As other colours came to be used they were classed in two groups—those of three colours and those of five. Monochrome glazes, however, were still made in the Ming dynasty, the white 'eggshell' ware being the most famous of these.

Porcelain attained its highest technical development after the conquest of China by the Manchus in 1644. After some years spent in quelling their rebellious subjects the Manchus settle down and tried to carry on the traditions and industries of the native dynasties. It was at this time that painting and sculpture became less and less important and ceramics reached the peak of refinement in finish, though the designs lost much of their original freshness and vitality. *Famille verte* and *famille rose* enamel decorations are among the many types made during this period.

The two great Manchu rulers were K'ang Hsi and his grandson Ch'ien Lung. Both were friendly in their own way to teachers from the West, and certain privileges were granted to a number of Catholic Fathers who now worked in the country. Such foreigners, however, had to obtain the permission of the Emperor to live in China, and were not allowed to return to their native countries. The letters of the Jesuit Père d'Entrecolles describing the methods of porcelain-making early in the eighteenth century supplied the West with the clues long sought in vain.

Strange as it may seem, while Europeans were trying in every way to break through the closed doors of the 'Middle Kingdom,' by sending missionaries and traders, and even representatives and emissaries, China herself was already having greater influence on the West than the West had on her.

Porcelain had much to do with this. Though the potteries of the Greeks were famous, no influence compared with that of the Chinese ceramics. Traders touching at Macao—the port for Canton and the only place open to European traders—not only carried away tea and

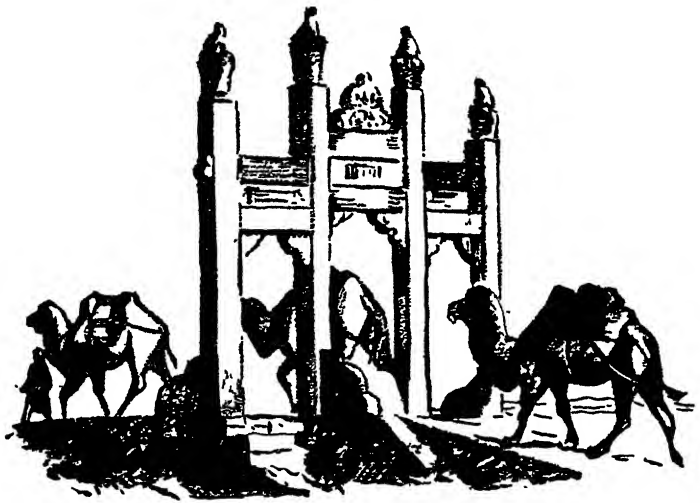


PORCELAINS OF K'ANG HSI AND CH'IENT LUNG

*By courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
and the "Encyclopædia Britannica"*

Finest Clay

silk, but vases, bowls, tea-cups, plates, and even screens of porcelain. These were objects over which their women were to exclaim, about which connoisseurs in the Old Country were to argue, and which brought fabulous sums because they bore the magic seals of Chinese masters.



THE CHINA THAT MARCO POLO FOUND

Inventions

FOREIGN trade with China began to grow during the Sung dynasty. Western nations were still small and sparsely populated as compared with such Oriental countries as India and China. They were less prosperous, too. No wonder that the first European travellers were mightily impressed by what they found, whether after the long overland journey to Kublai Khan's great capital, Cambaluc, in the North, or the sea-voyage to Zaitun in the South. The routes to China are carefully described in an old trade guide preserved from the fourteenth century.

It is not known, of course, how many traders from Europe actually went to China at this time. One traveller of the period says that in the southern part of China there were "two hundred cities greater than Venice." It is certain that not a few traders reached Cambaluc and Zaitun and carried on business in tea and silk and porcelain. There are records of Genoese and Venetians in China and of many in Venice who had made the round trip. The wish to travel was strong, for the burst of new growth in Europe was ready for birth. It was to send men on the crusades and spread the boundaries and power of Europe in the next century.

Inventions

Because he left behind him a record of his experiences, the most famous of the Venetian travellers was Marco Polo. Here was a man, an adventurer, who, seeing with Western eyes, told what he had seen. Perhaps we should not have this record were it not for the fact that after Marco Polo returned home he was taken prisoner in a sea battle between Venice and Genoa, and carried off to the rival city. Marco himself was not a writing man, but while he was in gaol he began to think of all that had happened to him. He fell in with a man who could write an account of it for him. This man was Rusticiano of Pisa. Because Marco dictated his story to him we now have a book of true but strange adventure, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*.

At the beginning of the story Marco himself was not in it. It began with Nicolo and Maffeo Polo, Marco's father and his uncle, and their visit to the court of Kublai Khan in Cambaluc. They had not set out for Cambaluc at all, but had started for the Crimea. From there they came to Turkestan, where they met some envoys from Cambaluc. They returned with them to the court of the great Mongol emperor. Kublai Khan was pleased with them, we know, because the Polos stayed in Cambaluc for years. When they started homeward again it was with an important commission from the Khan to return again, bringing with them one hundred Western teachers. When at last they reached Venice, Nicolo's son, whom they had left as a baby, was a boy of fifteen.

This boy was the Marco who returned to China with his father and uncle on the second trip, taking not one hundred, but only two teachers with them. Even these two soon found they were not adventuresome enough and turned back. The three Polos went on without them.

Now began Marco's great adventure. The year was 1275, and he was but twenty-one years old. Kublai Khan was attracted by him and made him a sort of special Minister. Because Marco learned to speak several Asiatic languages, he was sent out on important missions. For three years he was governor of Hangchow. These are the years he describes in his book. He tells of the shops flowing with silks; of the lovely gardens which at that time seemed entirely to enclose West Lake; of the pagodas, the tea-houses, the pergolas, the gilded pleasure-boats—all the splendour so well described by another traveller—"beyond dispute, the finest and noblest [city] in the whole world."

The Polos stayed a long time in China. At last, in 1292, they obtained the Khan's permission to return home. They were to accompany a young princess, the bride of the Khan's grandson, as far as Persia.

The China that Marco Polo found

Magnificently equipped, they started by sea. They carried messages for all the rulers of Europe, so friendly was the great Khan. But it was a hard trip. It took them two years to bring the princess to her destination and they lost much of their property and many of the party. The man whom the princess was to marry was dead by the time she arrived but she was married instead to his son, and this seems to have been quite satisfactory.

After being away for twenty years, the Polos finally reached Venice. Their arrival was a great event. Every one had given them up, thinking they had been lost at sea or on the long, hard overland journey. A great feast was prepared, and the leading men of the city were invited. When the feast was over Marco called for the old quilted-cotton coats in which the three of them had come home, and, taking a sharp knife, ripped open the seams. Out poured handfuls of precious stones: rubies, sapphires, diamonds—cut and uncut—a fabulous fortune.

All of this Marco tells in his book, and more, for he describes countries other than China—all those he crossed in his travels. If his book had been accepted as true in his time it would have been significant to the geography of the period, to Columbus, perhaps. But it seemed so fanciful and impossible that although it was read with greatest interest, it was considered a fairy tale.

Yet many things about the China of this time are not told in the book of Marco Polo. He does not tell of the paintings of Chao-Meng-fu, who was a favourite of the Khan and must often have been in the court at Cambaluc. Chao Meng-fu painted scenes full of life—a horseman during a halt, a raider tightening his saddle girth, four horses grazing, a restive horse being held back by a Mongol. One feels he must have been tempted to paint Marco himself, for the racial types in his paintings are clear.

It was a picturesque age, and an exciting one, for travellers from the West found unbelievable things going on in this land of Cathay. Some inventions, which have been considered discoveries of the Chinese, date from this time of intercourse between East and West. We know now that not all of them were Chinese discoveries, although China was doing many astonishing things.

Lodestones are referred to in an old Chinese book dated 240 B.C. as "the stone that summons or attracts." The Chinese were familiar with the magnetic compass. It was a simple device, a floating piece of wood upon which lay a magnetic object. Yet in the time of Marco



KUBLAI KHAN WAS ATTRACTED BY HIM

The China that Marco Polo found

Polo it first began to be used for navigation. Of the common belief that Marco Polo himself brought gunpowder and the compass to Europe from China, Sir Henry Yule writes, "Respecting the mariner's compass and gunpowder, I shall say nothing, as no one now, I believe, imagines Marco Polo to have had anything to do with their introduction." It is now considered more likely that the compass reached China through the Arabs, who used it, and were a sea-going people as the Chinese were not.

It is impossible to say how long before Marco Polo's visit to China the Chinese were using gunpowder. For a long time China was credited with the discovery of gunpowder, but it is probable that it was the result of a simultaneous development in the East and the West and began with the simplest combination which could bring about combustion or explosion. It had been used for fireworks until the Sung dynasty, but now, in the form of hand grenades, it began its long history in connexion with warfare.

From the earliest times, however, the Chinese have used firecrackers for the celebration of every occasion—sad, joyful, or ceremonious. It is so still. In little factories along the village streets one or two men work at making these firecrackers. They carefully lay on a block small squares of paper—the outside one red—moistening the edges with paste and then rolling them dexterously on an iron pin by the swinging motion of a suspended plane. When this pin is withdrawn the small cylinder made by it is stopped at one end with clay, the powder is poured in, and the fuse is inserted with an awl. Double charges are made by dividing the cylinder into two chambers with a wall of clay and inserting a fuse for each, the second one to be ignited by the first.

Strings of tiny firecrackers are popular and are carried in almost all processions on the ends of long bamboo poles from which they explode with a continuous din. At a funeral they are often thrust into every corner of a room or down alleys to frighten away evil spirits. For firecrackers serve three purposes; they honour the immortals, they disperse evil spirits, and they delight every Chinese crowd.

Strings of small firecrackers are still called *pien*, or whip, because in the days before the use of gunpowder the Chinese burned strips of dried bamboo; the fire, eating the hard wood slowly, gave out a loud popping sound as it reached each joint.

Marco Polo probably saw, too, a sight still familiar in China. This is the swift moving fingers of a man computing on a swan-pan, or abacus.

Inventions

Though the Roman abacus seems to antedate the Chinese one, its use in China has persisted. Probably the Chinese, like other peoples, began counting by using their fingers. The cumbrousness of Chinese numerals, as well as those of the Greeks and Romans, made it necessary to have some way of counting beyond the scope of a man's hand. The abacus, or counting-board, with beads strung on thin sticks or wires, which could be moved easily to representative positions, simplified matters. This was good, for until the zero was discovered and brought into common use through the Arabs—who in turn borrowed the system which we call Arabic from India—all arithmetic was difficult. But the zero was not used even after its discovery for some hundreds of years, so the abacus continued to be useful. To-day, everywhere in China, the swiftly clacking beads of the abacus may be heard behind any counter.

Kublai Khan built an observatory about three hundred years before that erected by Tycho Brahe, a famous Danish scientist and contemporary of Galileo and Kepler. In 1279 Kublai Khan erected bronze instruments of astronomy on the wall of his new capital, Cambaluc, later Peking. These were made by the celebrated Chinese astronomer and hydraulic engineer Kou Shouching. The instruments were modelled after some earlier ones of the Sung dynasty which had been set up in Kai Feng-fu, Honan, about A.D. 1050. In the *Shu Ching*, a record already ancient in the time of Confucius, it is said that the Emperor Yao revised and put into order the system of predicting equinoxes and solstices by means of culminating stars. It is certain that two thousand years before Christ the Chinese knew of the cycle of nineteen years in which solar and lunar years were harmonized; that they could make observations in the meridian; that they measured time by water-clocks; that they used regulating inter-armillary spheres and quadrants.

Nothing that Marco Polo could say in the account of his years in China could give a true impression of China under the great Kublai Khan, and nothing he could bring back could tell fully of what went on among the people of Cathay. The Great Khan welcomed men of Europe; he learned of them and amalgamated what he learned with what the Mongols and the Chinese knew. Dominicans and Franciscans, Jesuits and Nestorians, Armenian Christians and Mohammedans, Arabs and Portuguese, all were in China trading and studying and teaching. But this period was destined to be cut short, for, with the expulsion of the Mongols, China's doors were tightly closed for a time.



FROM SOMEWHERE

Drama

THE great Kublai Khan not only opened the doors of China towards the West, but he honoured the things of China too. He admired Confucius, devised an alphabet for the Mongol language, bettered the calendar, and opened an Imperial Academy. However, poetry and classical literature did not make any strides forward, although momentous development in literature came in two other fields. No one can say exactly why this was so, nor whence the initiative originated.

The first of these developments was in drama.

From the beginning of time on ceremonial occasions or when sacrifices were to be made the Chinese people danced set dances in rhythm to music. In the *Odes*, 600 B.C., it is said :

Lighdy, sprightly,
To the dance I go,
The sun shining brightly
In the court below.

The movement of the dancers was slow and measured, and often feathers or flutes held in the hands were waved to and fro. Gradually words to be sung were added, until at last the music and singing with gestures displaced the dance itself. This was a form of opera.

Towards the middle of the eighth century after Christ the Emperor

Drama

Ming Huang, who was fond of music, established what was known as the Pear Garden College in which three hundred people, of both sexes, were trained. Although these musicians were really trained for the court, some believe that the college was actually a school of drama and the term 'Pear Garden' is still used with reference to a dramatic fraternity.

But drama, as we think of it, does not seem to have been known until the thirteenth century, when Chinese stage plays first appeared. This was during the Mongol rule. No one knows exactly where these plays came from nor why they began at that time. But the following legend shows that drama was known to the Mongols.

In the year 1031 K'ung Tao-fu, one of the forty-fifth descendants of Confucius, was sent as an envoy to the Kitans. A great banquet was given in his honour, followed by a theatrical entertainment. In it Confucius was cast as a low comedian. K'ung Tao-fu was so disgusted that he left the performance, and the Kitans had much ado to make the proper apologies.

The Chinese idea of a play even yet is not quite like ours of the West. In large cities of China, except for one month of the New Year holiday period or during periods of mourning for national officials, plays are acted all the year round in public theatres. There is no charge for admission but every one is expected to buy refreshments which are sold in the building throughout the performance. To the Westerner it is an unbelievable sight to see patrons eating sweetmeats, cracking watermelon seeds by the million, or drinking tea from cups refilled continuously from great kettles of boiling water which are carried about by waiters. From time to time the playgoers refresh themselves by a thorough wiping of the face and hands on small Turkish towels, wrung out in basins of perfumed hot water. These are often slung dexterously across several aisles to those who indicate that they wish them. Conversation is not banned, and often a lively argument may go on at the very time the actors are performing.

There is no whispered awe or waiting silence at the sight of a well-known actor, nor is there anything that compares to autograph-hunting. But there is loud applause when a familiar climax in a story is well done. As in ancient Greece, actors are under a social ban and for three generations their sons may not compete at public examinations. Plays are for the entertainment of guests at a dinner party, or are acted on stages erected and maintained by Trade Guilds. Counties and cities may raise funds by subscription to finance the actors.

From Somewhere

Whether in village or city, the stage itself is always the same. It is simply a raised platform with two doors, one for entrance and one for exit. There are no wings, no flies, no scenery, no curtain. Everything is left to suggestion, which must be provided by the actors themselves. Because there is no curtain to give the feeling of a completed scene, the actors who have completed an episode all go out together, including those who are also to take part in the next scene. These then come back at once through the entrance to the stage. There is no interval, and the musicians who are seated on the floor at the back of the stage do not pause. Very often what seems to the Westerner to be one interminable play is several run together without a break.

The real art of the Chinese actor is his ability to suggest. His training begins when he is nine years old. He has to learn acrobatic feats, to practise walking as a bound-foot woman walks, since no women actors have been allowed on the stage until recent times; he has to walk out in the open air for an hour every day with his head thrown back and his mouth open to strengthen his voice, and he can eat only a special diet. Fifty-six actors make up a full company and each of these must learn perfectly from one hundred to two hundred plays, for there is never a prompter. These plays are rarely plays from books—or if they are, they are cut down to suit the actors. They are generally short farces written especially for the troupe. Because actors are classified into five kinds, each actor knows automatically what his part will be when a play is chosen for performance.

Little can equal the humour of a Chinese actor who, on a stage bare of scenery, gallops across the stage floor, dismounts, and passes his horse to a groom. Or one who wanders down a street, stopping at an open shop window to flirt with a pretty girl; or hides behind an embattlement to attack his enemy. Nothing is there but the man, and yet one sees it more clearly and realistically than if there were a hundred scenes and endless props. Only the costumes help him and these may be lavish.

More humorous still to the Westerner is the complete disregard of realism. At the end of their parts dead men get up and walk off the stage. Sometimes a corpse, if the story requires that he be carried off, will act the part of his own bearers and make the motions of carrying himself away! Or at a tense moment an attendant, not part of the play, will march across the foreground with a cup of tea to clear the throat of the leading performer, who is at that very instant appealing to high heaven.



THE STAGE IS SIMPLY A RAISED PLATFORM

From Somewhere

A Chinese audience does not go to the theatre to see the play itself (probably the story is well known and has been seen many times before) but to see how well the actors render it. Thus it does not matter much whether the people hear all that is said or not, except when a point which is considered a special test of an actor's skill is reached. Then a sudden hush falls over the crowd, to be followed by loud applause if it is met with satisfaction. A story is told of an actor who played the part of Ch'in Kuei, a treacherous rival. He played it so well that one of the audience was overcome with anger and, leaping to the stage, stabbed him to death. Since that event the name of the rival has been used to refer to a spittoon.

Chinese plays are not divided as ours are into comedy and tragedy. They are divided rather into military and civil categories. The military plays are historical. Emperors and generals dash wildly over the stage with their armies and horsemen, executing traitors before the very eye of the audience. Sometimes they indulge in a handspin or somersault to give vent to emotion for which there is no other outlet. Civil plays have to do with the entanglements of ordinary life. Chinese written plays are as unobjectionable as any other written plays. However, because actors are allowed so much licence in making gags and these so frequently take a questionable turn, until recent years respectable women have seldom gone to the theatre.

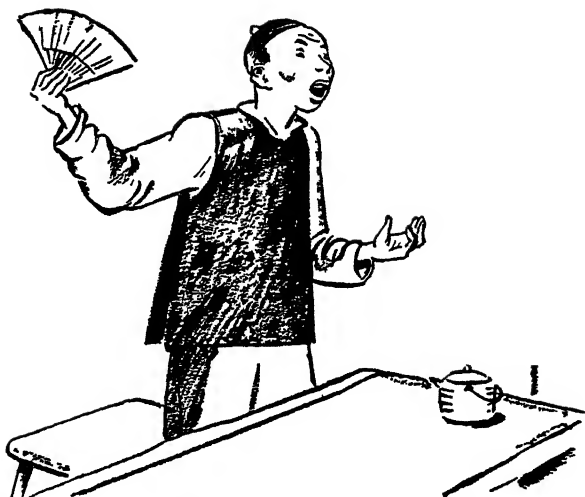
Most well-known plays have three editions: the one that is read, the one learned by the actor, and the one that the actor gives under the stimulation of inspiration.

The language of the play itself does not attempt to arouse passion or pathos. Thoughts are expressed in a commonplace way. This makes the reading of Chinese plays a dry business, and the translation of them is something of a task. But much is left to the imagination of the actor, for the barer the framework upon which his story stands, the more garnishing he can do. Gesture, caricature, tricks of tone, and suggestion turn the work of the Chinese actor into an art differing greatly from that of the actor of the West, who learns his part word for word, is supported by every conceivable device, by prompter, props, scenery, appropriate music, and lights. Like the comedian of the West, the Chinese actor depends on his own quick wit and his sensitivity to the mood of the audience to succeed in getting the response he hopes for.

Characteristically, little is known of the dramatists who wrote the

Drama

best-known Chinese plays. Wang Shih-fu is known as the author of thirteen plays, the one in sixteen scenes entitled *The Story of the Western Pavilion* being best liked. Yet it is more popular as a novel than as a play, for in the field of fiction the Mongols contributed once again to the cultural development of China.



THE NOVEL GROWS UP

Literature

TO attribute the birth of the Chinese novel to the Mongols is unfair, for, as Pearl Buck says,¹ "the Chinese novel springs from the soil of China and tells of the people of China for the Chinese themselves." The novel began and developed for the one purpose of amusing the common people. Scholars had always written in the classical style and not in the common language of every day. Although originally vernacular, the classical style was kept so pure and unchanged that in time it became as obsolete to the farmer or villager or man of the street as the English of Chaucer is to-day to the cinema-loving crowds of a Western city. There grew up another language of the common people called by them the *peh hua*. This is the language in which the novel was first told and written, and in which it continued to develop.

The novel made no sudden appearance in any given dynasty. It began with the story-teller, who for centuries had amused the village crowd after work was over. Such a story-teller could not use literary language, because no one would have understood it. The story-teller or reader had to be the mouthpiece for a large group. Proportionately few of the common people could read, and so they gathered about to

¹ *The Chinese Novel* (Nobel Prize Lecture).

Literature

listen to one who could. After a hard day's work it was good to have the mind rested and diverted by a tale. If the people were amused they collected a few coppers in some one's hat to buy the story-teller a cup of tea to wet his throat; or perhaps to make up for the fact that he had lost some time from the work he might otherwise have been doing while he gave them pleasure. If things went well with him perhaps he gave up regular work altogether and became a professional story-teller, wandering from place to place, buying what books were to be had or making up a repertoire of his own. There was always history in which he could search for characters, or new incidents for inspiration from the lives of doers of great deeds. He could always use his own fertile imagination to make these come to life and delight those who listened. And there were always the people themselves to inspire him. As he travelled he often came upon stories of things that had happened in these very towns and villages and he added them to his stock. He wrote down things that people told him and embellished them—not with literary phrases, but with touches that made them more vivid and colourful.

The Chinese have never cared for swift, crude action alone. They love to see the characters standing out clearly, each detail as it should be for the one to whom it belongs. One of the greatest Chinese novels, *Shui Hu Chuan*, has a hundred and eight separate major characters; the Chinese often say in praise of it, "When any of the hundred and eight begins to speak, we do not need to be told his name. By the way the words come from his mouth we know who he is."

While the common people were being amused in their village tea-shops or along their narrow streets, the men in the imperial palace, too, were hungering for amusement. Here, too, the novel was making its appearance. Especially if the dynasty were a foreign one, the ruler appointed 'imperial ears' to go out in common clothes and listen to what the people were talking about. The purpose was originally, of course, to uncover discontents and to ward off rebellions. But these 'imperial ears' heard much that had nothing to do with rebellion and they found that often their royal masters would rather listen to a tale of some event, politically quite unimportant, than to an official report. These reporters began to write down the best of what they heard, so that they could use it again, and so the novel began. The common people listening to a man who appeared to be one of them, learned that their 'Son of Heaven' was as human as they were. Did he not quarrel

The Novel grows up

with the Empress who bore him no sons, and was there not talk of the poisonings of enemies?

So the novel came—from the storyteller among the common people, and the 'imperial ears' who brought richness and warmth into the closed courts of the Forbidden City in Peking.

The novel grew slowly in these ways. The early novel was never considered to be literature—and is not to this day. The language is flowing and natural, but there is no great list of Chinese novelists. Their greatest novels were probably not written by any one man but by several who, over a broad space of time, read what their predecessors had left and added to it or improved it. Chinese novels are not planned. They grow. This makes them rich in detail which always centres round the characters about whom they tell. A famous novel, *The White Snake*, by an unknown author, began in the T'ang dynasty. At this time the hero was a supernatural snake. In the next century the snake became a vampire woman. In the third version it becomes more gentle and is a faithful wife who helps her husband and gives him a son. The character does not change. It merely loses its supernatural quality. Stories written in the Han dynasty are so vigorous that, like the paintings of that period, they are, as the Chinese say, remindful of galloping horses. With the spread of Buddhism, tales of superstition and religion, with rewards for well-doing, miracles, dragons, and transmigration began to appear. It is the 'Gulliver' period of the Chinese story. But whatever its character and however well-loved it is, the novel is still not literature and is referred to as the *hsiao-shuo*, or as something slight and valueless.

In the T'ang dynasty love stories began. The beautiful Yang Kuei Fei, whom Li Po, the poet, admired so much, lived at this time. The love stories of this period come nearer than others to meeting the form of the Western novel. The Chinese say of them, "We must read the stories of the T'ang because though they deal with small matters, yet they are written in so moving a manner that the tears come."

In the time of the Mongols the Chinese novel came to its best, for it was as though the Mongols brought with them hungry, untutored minds. They turned eagerly to the drama and the novel, and imperial favour at last brought new release and life to both. Even then novels were not literature, though the two most famous novels were now produced, the third coming somewhat later. These three stand for the Chinese novel at its best. They were ignored by men of letters and



IT BEGAN WITH THE STORY-TELLER

The Novel grows up

damned as dangerous, but they lived because the people read them and listened to them and told them and acted them, until the scholars had to find a way of accepting them. The way was to say that they were not stories at all but allegories. Long treatises were written to put hidden meaning into the simple and enticing doings of men. But the common people did not read the treatises and were not bothered at all by this studied attempt to recognize what could not be suppressed.

The first two great novels were *Shui Hu Chuan* and *San Kuo*. *Shui Hu Chuan* was written by no one man, even though, in the modern version, a single name is attached. The story centres round a handful of robbers of the Sung dynasty. These robbers were so strong in punishing evildoers when no other came forward to do it, that at last an official version was written in which the robbers were defeated by the state army and everything was properly set to rights. However, once again the common people did not read the official version nor would they listen to it; they knew the truth—that the common people struggled against a corrupt officialdom. The book is a panorama of people. Every one is there, and because of this and of its timeless quality, people still read it and love it.

The second of the greatest novels, *San Kuo*, is a story of wars and statesmanship; of the 'Three Kingdoms,' the period just after the collapse of the Han dynasty. It is the struggle of people for their liberty, and so is the story of guerrillas to-day. The common people, every man and boy, know the story of the 'Three Kingdoms.'

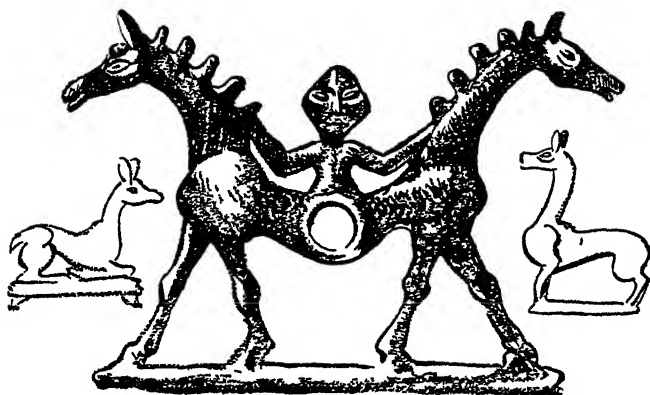
Hung Lou Meng (*The Dream of the Red Chamber*), the latest and most modern of the three outstanding novels of China, began as an autobiographical novel of an official in the Manchu regime. The story itself is simple; but it is full of implication, splendid in character study and a portrayal of human emotions. It has a supernatural quality. It is the story of a boy who at birth had a piece of beautiful jade in his mouth—a bit of heaven that was left out when heaven was broken and mended again. Because it is a story of family life it easily found a place among the common people.

These three novels are the ones always mentioned by the Chinese when they are asked of their novels. For they are of the life of the Chinese. The Chinese writer did not attempt to invent life, but as Pearl Buck so aptly puts it, "He simply sorted life as it flowed around and through him." It was not an art with him. His creative instinct was so great that he had to create more life—as is true of the real artist in any field—

Literature

and this was his prime concern. He was not bothered about styles and techniques. Were his creatures alive? This was the only question that he had to ask himself.

The Chinese people have answered that question. Their novels grew not in a single generation, but through the generations, being added to, developed, enriched by life itself. They tell of themselves; they *are* themselves, seen and recognized as they are read or heard.



BEAUTY IN SMALL THINGS

Treasures

AS though reacting from a foreign rule, the dynasty founded in 1368 reverted to the time before the Mongol invasion. It was founded by the Chinese leader Chu Yuan-chang, a rebel who was strong enough to press northward and take Cambaluc from the last Mongol. China now seemed as closed and as self-contained as before the days of the Great Khan. The routes overland fell into disuse, and the sea became the only avenue by which influences from the outside world could reach China. Trade was carried on with lands and islands lying to the south, and with Japan, who was quickly learning the culture of her great neighbour to the west.

In the latter part of the fifteenth century Europeans began to press to land on Chinese shores. European expansion had begun, and daring traders and explorers, having found a new world in the western hemisphere, had also found an all-sea route to Africa and India and so to the Indies and China. The first traders to round the Cape of Good Hope and get a foothold in India were Portuguese. A few years later they reached China itself, but because of their lawlessness the Chinese treated them severely. At last they succeeded in starting a Portuguese settlement in Macao. This was the first inch of Chinese territory to fall to European invaders. After the Portuguese came the Spanish, who settled in the Philippines. Near the end of the Ming dynasty the Dutch arrived and established themselves in Formosa. More important than the coming of all these was the advent of the English, who pushed eastward from India.



MING DYNASTY THREE-COLOUR ENAMEL WARE

By courtesy of the George Eumorfopoulos Collection and the "Encyclopædia Britannica"



WROUGHT-IRON PICTURE AND CARVING ON BAMBOO

Beauty in Small Things

This invasion of China by the West was done under the name of trade. Yet another force was at work as well. This was the missionary movement. The great Jesuits Francis Xavier and Matteo Ricci were men whom the Chinese respected and who, because of their devotion to learning, were recognized as great teachers. Though China was learning from the West, in her arts she was giving back more than she was receiving.

Cloisonné, which the Chinese say came from Constantinople, and had been used during the Mongol period, now increased in popularity. The Chinese called it by the name *fa lan*. This can be traced to Folin, the Chinese name for the realms ruled by the Byzantine emperors. Cloisonné, which is a form of enamel, requires great patience on the part of the maker, but—perhaps because the Chinese artisan is especially painstaking—it came to perfection in China. Thin strips of metal, in the outline of the design, are soldered to the metal base of the object. The little cells made in this way are filled with enamel pastes of the colours needed—green for leaves, bright hues for flowers, black for shadows—and then the piece is baked until the pastes are fused. Usually several layers of paste and several bakings are necessary to build up the enamel to the necessary depth. When the last firing is over, the object is polished with pumice stone under running water. This is a slow process and sometimes takes weeks. The rubbing makes the whole surface smooth, but, more than this, it leaves the interlacing metal strips clear and shining, outlining, in beautiful distinctness, the pattern of the colours themselves. One of the most attractive designs, however, is that made of monochromes. These are full of minute detail, carried out in one colour—soft green, or blue, or black. They have a simplicity and dignity lacking in the more ornate pictorial patterns.

Another form of inlaid enamel, which came to be known as *champlevé*, is that in which the background metal of the object is carved or grooved out and the spaces are filled with enamel. Usually much more of the original metal surface is left by this method. Some of the loveliest of old Chinese pieces are of the *champlevé* variety.

Enamelling came to be used also as a coating or paint for the surface of metal or porcelain. Some very beautiful porcelain images of the goddess Kuan Yin, or the Goddess of Mercy, are enamelled.

One may gaze in wonder at the carefully turned patterns of the metal strips on a piece of cloisonné, but it is even harder to believe that anyone could possibly carve six or eight concentric filigreed balls of ivory, one

Treasures

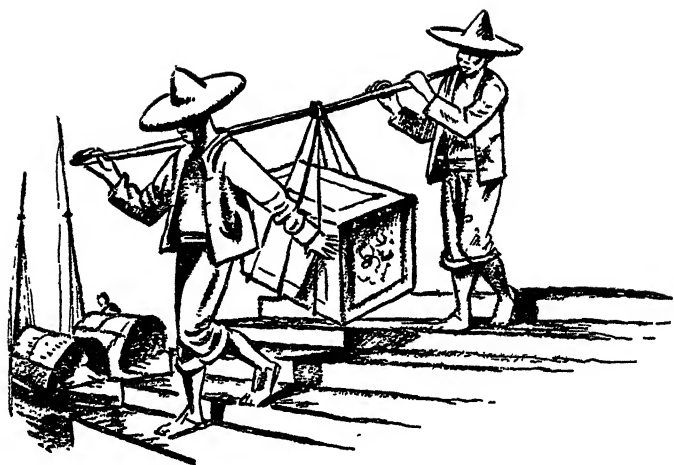
within the other, from the hard substance of a tusk. He may find it equally hard to believe that a crouching tiger or stately elephant, because they are so full of life and perfect in detail, could be carved from ivory. Rhinoceros horn is used as well as ivory. Many very beautiful things are also carved from bamboo, which hardens with age. Some of the work is done on the face of large pieces or sections of bamboo and some is devised of twisted bamboo roots. Dragons and sages and scenes from ancient events are favourite subjects.

Pictures of wrought iron first appeared in the seventeenth century. There is a story explaining their origin. A blacksmith, living near Wuhu in the province of Anhwei, had an apprentice named Tang Tien Che. His master thought the boy worthless. To improve him he beat him so often that at last the young fellow ran away. That night as the boy lay asleep under a tree, very lonely and disconsolate, he had a dream. An old man with a flowing beard appeared and asked him his trouble. Tang told him what was the matter and how long he had endured the cruelty of his master. At that the old man drew a piece of twisted root from his robes and told Tang to eat it and then return to his master. Then the old man disappeared. Tang, suddenly refreshed, decided to go back and arrived at the blacksmith's shop again by daybreak.

Boldly he knocked at the door, which was opened in haste. The master, seeing who was there, snatched up an iron bar with which to strike him. But Tang, taking the bar from him, quickly said, "Master ! See! I can work it as no man before me!" At that he bent and twisted the bar in his hands until it turned into a beautiful picture. This, according to legend, was the beginning of the iron pictures of China.

However these earliest iron pictures began, European travellers and traders were glad to exchange these articles of ironwork for furs, domestic cottons, or whatever the practical Chinese wanted in place of the price in silver.

For Chinese products had caught the fancy of the West. Surrounded still by a mist of magic and adventure, and tinged with the sweetness of sandalwood, Chinese objects, whether a teakwood table, a lacquered screen, a painted fan, a fragile porcelain vase, or a box of tea, were more prized and sought after than treasures from any other part of the world.



CHINA BECOMES THE RAGE

Pattern for Beauty

THE dynasty set up by the Manchus was the longest in China's history. For nearly three centuries, from 1644 to 1912, they held the power over a China which was even greater in extent than that held by the Mongols. China was probably the richest and greatest country of the world. It was the day of the great emperors, K'ang Hsi and Ch'ien Lung, whose seals made porcelain priceless; men who would always be famous because of their intelligence and openness to progress and learning.

Once again the doors of China stood open. They had not been thrown open willingly as in the days of the Great Khan. They had been forced open slowly by trade treaties. Catholic missionaries wrote of China and translated portions of her literature. What they sent out was read avidly by teachers and peoples of the West, who suddenly realized that here, in the Middle Kingdom, lay riches of thought greater than those they already had.

But it was not through the students of Chinese thought that China became popular in the West. It was through the traders who bought her beauties and poured them out for the people of Europe and America to see. The wealthy of Europe and America copied China in every way they could. In gardens, pergolas and miniature pagodas and curve-roofed tea-houses and pavilions sprang up. These were painted, it is true, in colours too brilliant, and designed in lines lacking the grace of



MING DYNASTY THREE-COLOUR ENAMEL WARE
INCENSE BOWL WITH LOW RELIEF DECORATION

*By courtesy of the George Eumorfopoulos Collection
and the "Encyclopædia Britannica"*

Pattern for Beauty

the originals, yet they were Chinese in intent. Plants were carried by root or seed and thrust into soil alien to them and nurtured carefully; partly because they were valuable in themselves, having come so far, but more because they were part of the magic which was China itself.

Many of the most beautiful of the garden flowers which we accept as ours, as of our own grandmothers' gardens, first came from China, brought by traders when they returned with a cargo of silk and tea and curios. Tea roses, some azaleas, certain varieties of cultivated hollyhocks, honeysuckle, and primroses, chrysanthemums, hydrangeas, some poppies, mountain peonies, magnolias, camellias, China asters, wistaria, Easter lilies, some narcissi, iris, and the dainty ginko-tree—all originated in China, in the soil of ancient gardens, temple courts, and bamboo-covered hills.

Oranges, which had been found in India by the first European travellers who went there, and had been cultivated in the common sweet variety for centuries all through China and the countries to the south, were brought to Europe by the Portuguese. These 'Chinese apples,' as they are still called in Germany, were to become one of the chief fruits of southern Europe and of the southern part of North America and of South America. Peaches, apricots, lemons, and the pomelo—forbear of the grapefruit—all originated in China.

Furniture made of teakwood and carved in intricate dragon and bamboo designs was carried across the oceans to grace Western interiors. Painted and lacquered screens were carefully unpacked and exclaimed over as they were hinged together again and painstakingly set up in rooms unsuited to Oriental beauty. Porcelain was handled as though it came from heaven itself; examined as to the marks of the factory whence it came—probably the imperial one of Ching-te Chen—and placed on the whatnot to be seen with envy by all who had no such piece, or lacked one in precisely the same colour or design.

In stark New England front rooms and ornate Old World parlours one still finds, like a crimson thread running through the warp of a fabric, some of these treasures, reminders of that passion of men for the Orient. In New England it satisfied a hunger for warmth and beauty and magic. In England it appeased the desire of all to have the best and greatest handiwork which the world, up to that time, had produced. In Europe men craved for it, for it was like food to hunger.

'Cathay,' 'The Indies,' 'Gold of Ophir,' were words which conjured up an unknown, suggestive atmosphere that lent to objects more than

China becomes the Rage

their real qualities, misting the eyes with emotion, making the heart beat fast with excitement and the hands tremble with possessiveness. China still represented the unknown. Her name was coupled with tales brought by traders and missionaries, with written words sent out by letter-writers, with bits of philosophy translated and quoted. No wonder that she became the most envied country in all the world! The Fathers, Jesuit and Catholic, as well as some of the Protestant groups now at work, were responsible for a turn towards the acceptance of Chinese philosophical thought. A basis for possible understanding was being laid.

The first steps had been taken by traders who pushed open her doors. The second was being taken by missionaries. After many attempts they gradually gained a foothold and established themselves in concessions given them under pressure of treaties taken by force or threat of force from the Chinese. They became impregnated, not with the Chinese religions, but with the Chinese personality, more potent by far than any theory of the divinities. Returning to their homelands, they told of what they had seen and what they had experienced, and although those who heard gasped at the strangeness of the monstrous tales, they were nevertheless broadened by the very knowledge that there were people such as the Chinese. For though superstitious and 'heathen' practices were stressed inordinately, the Chinese personality still shone through the picture. None who heard could but be convinced more strongly than ever that the 'heathen Chinese' was a man eminently 'worth saving.'

Stranger still, in spite of fantastic maladies and hairbreadth escapes, none who went to China and lived there for a time was fully content to live anywhere else again. Disease, fanatical outbursts, anti-foreign mobs, and the lack of all the accustomed ways of living could not kill the desire to be in China. China itself had taken hold of them—China and the Chinese personality. China fascinated them with a beauty which could never be like that of any other country; its rich, mellow flavour of living made every other taste flat and insipid by contrast. Chinese personality, revealed in the writings of her great men, and in her common people, grew into the life of every sensitive, thinking, human white man, whatever his calling, as he stayed year after year.

It was the beginning of the realization of a truth now clear—that the Chinese are free souls. Whatever the government under which they lived; whatever the outward circumstances of their lives, their art—



THE FIRST STEPS HAD BEEN TAKEN BY TRADERS

China becomes the Rage

the expression of themselves in colour and form—and their reasoning of life, continued. Other great nations rose to magnificence, and fell. But China, broken sometimes and sometimes under foreign rulers, was China still, and the life of her people went on as if unconscious of the One who sat on the Throne of Heaven.

China was the rage as far as beauty was concerned. She was far more than that in the influence that she had on world thought. For the end of that influence has not yet come.



THE FINE ART OF EATING

Connoisseurs of Taste

ON the shelves of delicatessen shops one can sometimes find tins of chop suey, fried noodles, bean sprouts, and bamboo shoots, and bottles of soy sauce. Fashionable Chinese restaurants exist in Western countries, but unless it be on tables set deep behind little laundries, or hidden in Chinatowns where no Westerners enter, one will hardly find real Chinese food. For it does not matter how many nor how authentic the imported foods may be, the genuine flavour will be lacking.

Perhaps it is because the low-lying mists of the Yangtze River are not here. Perhaps it is because our chlorinated water kills something of the mellowness of water rich, even when boiled, with the past of deceased bacteria. Perhaps—and I am sure this is the truer reason—it is because yellow hands, in an alien country, do not cook with the same creative abandon as at home, with a pinch of this, and a dash of that, and a drop or two more of a couple of sauces done up together in exactly the right sort of a pot, over the right sort of fire, built of glowing charcoal or fragrant roadside grass. For Chinese cooking is an art in itself and not simply the making of something with which to fill the stomach. Moreover, outside China there is not the inspiration of discerning tongues which know, as if by instinct, the rightness of flavours, nor do

The Fine Art of Eating

Westerners have all the traditions and memories of how every dish should taste. Worse yet, there is the near certainty that the food will not be eaten with bamboo or bone chopsticks held delicately in the hand with accustomed ease, but rather with cruel metallic knives and forks, or even spoons; and the touch of metal, albeit of good sterling, seems to ruin the flavour of perfect sauces and richly turned meats.

For bowls, even if only the coarsest blue-and-white bowls found in every farmer's house in China, and chopsticks, though of rough bamboo, bought for a couple of coppers, have much to do with the eating of Chinese food. To anyone who has lived long years in China and become accustomed to Chinese food, not as an innovation or variation in the menu but as the menu itself, the *feel* of the bowl held cupped in the left hand, the steam of the rice, rising warm and fragrant to the nostrils, while the right hand which holds the chopsticks reaches for a bit of pork or a sliced cabbage, lifting them dripping from their embracing sauces—is prerequisite to the full enjoyment of Chinese eating. Before ever a bite is taken the odour of rice and the pungency of meat work their magic. The mind responds, and the whole digestive system is prepared.

The root of the difference between the way the Chinese and the Westerner eats is that the Chinese does not pretend that eating is not a serious business. He does not try to hide it or cover it or act as though it were just a necessary thing to be gone through with. As Dr Lin Yutang says: ¹

If there is anything we are serious about, it is neither religion nor learning, but food. We openly acclaim eating as one of the few human joys of this life. This question of attitude is very important, for unless we are honest about it we will never be able to lift eating and cooking to an art. The difference of attitude regarding the problem of food is represented in Europe by the French and the English. The French eat enthusiastically, while the English eat apologetically. The Chinese national genius decidedly leans towards the French in the matter of feeding ourselves.

The importance of food in Chinese life is very clearly shown in the frankness with which it is discussed at table. In Western lands it is considered lacking in etiquette to comment upon what is served at the table of one's host, or even at one's own table. But in China lack of interest is discourteous, just as failure to comment upon a friend's latest portrait or latest poem or composition would be failing in appreciation

¹ *My Country and my People.*



飯熟了

THE BOWL HELD CUPPED IN THE LEFT HAND

The Fine Art of Eating

of artistic effort. A Westerner may shrink when a guest says quite openly that the bamboo is overdone and so not crisp enough, or that the duck is not quite tender, or that a dash more of ginger would have perfected the sea-slugs, or that the 'eight precious things' is too strong of jasmine buds. But the Chinese host or hostess either agrees and has the cook called in forthwith in order to receive the criticism, given not harshly but in order that he may become a greater cook in future; or else takes another bite meditatively so as to discover whether the trouble is that or something else. If, then, the comment is favourable, as, "Never was a chicken more perfectly stewed with red dates," or, "But the yellow fish is crisp to the last bone and the sauce indescribable!" a glow passes all round the table, the lips smack in appreciation, and the work of art is accepted among the connoisseurs.

For Chinese are connoisseurs of eating. From the coolie who knows good Chinese cabbage when he tastes it—cooked yet crisp, done yet clear green and sparkling white—and rice, when it is properly washed and properly steamed over the fuel he has himself cut from the hillsides; to the scholar or statesman who judges his 'chicken velvet' or his 'bird's-nest soup'—every Chinese expects certain things of his food—that this food shall be made the most of by every trick, and craft, and touch of imagination, of which the human brain is capable.

To the Westerner it would be preposterous to name a dish after a poet, or a stew after a playwright. The nearest approach to this is found in the popular story of the knighting of a steak by an English king, although the story is erroneous since 'sirloin' comes from surloin, meaning merely upper loin. But the Chinese openly name certain cuts of meat after great names in history and their various soups after great artists. They go further than this. They write poems about a certain vegetable soup and relate the details of entire menus at the crucial point of a story, for they believe that the good soup honours a man's name and that the menu, too, is crucial in the development of the story.

Eating is nothing to be ashamed of, is it? Do not all men eat, or wish they could, and do not all men enjoy it? Thus even the most eminent scholar—the man whose life is his brain, seeing food brought in and set before him, a bowl at a time—a way that evokes greater appreciation than that of surfeiting one with the sight of too much at once—carefully pulls up his long sleeves so that they will be well out of the way, lifts his bowl of rice, and raises his chopsticks to bury them inquisitively in the steaming fragrance of pork balls seasoned with garlic and soy

Connoisseurs of Taste

sauce and a dash of brown sugar. He pulls out the roundest and tenderest and most juicy morsel and sets his teeth into it. (It is like pulling the full, rounded melody out of a Beethoven chord; like standing before a painting which succeeds in expressing the thought of the artist.) When he is eating it, he can see no crime in smacking his lips, as is natural to every one of us. And if next he lifts a bit of Mandarin fish, which is crisp through, and dripping sweet-sour sauce, he does not feel it beneath him to crunch the bones openly, carefully examining the scrap left in his chopsticks to see what the next nip of his teeth will bring. It is food, is it not, and careful work and imagination have gone into it? Well, then, it is deserving of appreciation.

It is more an art and more deserving of appreciation than cooking in the West, because the Chinese eat everything that is edible and some things that are not, according to the criterion of the Western world. As Dr Lin puts it:

The question has often been asked as to what we eat. The answer is that we eat all the edible things on this earth. We eat crabs by preference, and often eat barks by necessity. Economic necessity is often the mother of our inventions in food. We are too overpopulated, and famine is too common for us not to eat everything we can lay our hands on. And it stands to reason that, in this positively exhaustive experiment on edibles, we should have stumbled upon discoveries, as most scientific or medical discoveries have been stumbled upon.

No one, I think, will dispute the point that it is harder to make a delectable dish out of nothing than out of choice ingredients. The Chinese have found ways of doing that very thing. Consider the webs of ducks' feet! Who of the West would choose them for a special dish? Yet they are on the menu of expensive restaurants in China, and they should be there, for the cooking and the sauce have worked the miracles.

Chinese cooking may not be a study in vitamins or a balanced diet, but it is an art. It pleases the palate and the stomach and the whole being of man, and that is what the artist at cooking strives for. Is not the smock of the artist bespattered with paint, and are not the fingers of the writer smudged with ink? The Chinese say that the sign of a good cook is a dirty apron. Why be ashamed of it? He too is an artist.



WONDER BEAN

Soya

THERE seems to be no fairy tale to parallel the story of Jack and the Beanstalk in Chinese nursery lore, yet a true fairy tale exists in one of the commonest products of Chinese agriculture. Although it is one of the oldest legumes cultivated by man, if not indeed the oldest, the origin of the soy-bean is not clear. But for the Western world its origin is certainly China.

Scientifically the *Soja max*, the soy-bean, grows best in northern China, particularly Manchuria, but its branching stems and three-parted leaves with their small lilac-coloured flowers may be seen in fields much farther south. When the Japanese took control of Manchuria they began an enthusiastic development of the bean, not only for its oil, which was largely exported, but for the residue from making the oil, the bean cake, which they took to Japan and experimented with as a fertilizer. The Chinese had long used it for this purpose while the Japanese were using fish fertilizer. Experiments showed the bean cake to be superior.

But fertilizing is only one of the seemingly unlimited number of uses to which the soy-bean is being put; already it is employed in more ways than any other plant, and new uses are constantly being discovered.

Soy.

To the Chinese people it is first of all a food. In its original form as a small green bean it is cooked in various ways. As the source of their most useful sauce, *sho-yu*, it is common throughout China. As the substance of bean curd, the precipitated powder of the ground bean, *deo fu*, it is basic in Chinese cooking. The oil pressed from the ripe bean is used as a cooking oil. Secondary is its place with the Chinese farmer who knows that, as well as a fertilizer in the form of bean cake, it is helpful to the soil if, occasionally, a crop of the beans themselves are planted. Besides this, the vines are fine for forage, and farm animals thrive upon them.

What the Chinese learned by practical experiment, scientists have proved in recent years. Soy-beans contain all the vitamins, especially vitamin B, and twice as much protein and fat as meat. They are almost entirely free of sugar and starch and so can be fed to diabetics. When finely ground they produce a milk that is more digestible than cow's milk and can be used as a substitute for it in the feeding of invalids and infants. From this milk, by the use of alum, may be precipitated a curd, which when pressed into cakes looks like cottage cheese and has many of its qualities. This is the *deo-fu* that the Chinese cook with vegetables, fry, or pickle or spice. The beans contain iron, calcium, phosphorus, and copper. Recently stigmasterol, a hormone important in the preparation of certain sex hormones, has been derived from them.

Soy-bean oil, while important in China, as a food oil, has not been accepted as such in the West except when it is disguised in margarines. But industrially it is very important and rivals cottonseed and linseed oil in the production of paints. Although it is classed as one of the non-drying oils, it nevertheless dries more quickly than some in this group and is being developed rapidly. It is now used in paints, varnishes, enamels, printing inks, and soaps. It is grown in wide areas in America, the two million bushels grown in 1917 increasing to one hundred and five million by 1941, which amount was doubled in 1942. Half a billion pounds of soy-bean oil were processed in the United States in 1941. Casein, which is one of the residue products, is used in paper sizing, in paints, and as a water-proofing for textiles. Soy meal combined with formaldehyde yields plastics which are becoming increasingly important. Thus, in your motor-car alone, the gear-lever knob or the artificial leather used in the seat coverings may have been made from the little green bean. In the United States it has been discovered that from a soy-bean product can be made helmets which are strong enough

Wonder Bean

to deflect blows up to forty pounds. They are lighter and more comfortable than metal helmets and can be worn by mine workers and men engaged on construction jobs. Even though its scientific uses, such as food, paint oil, plastic, fertilizer, and the like are many, the discovery of the soy-bean seems only just to have begun.

But science has little to do with the artistic use of the soy-bean, for this lies in the hands of the creator of Chinese foods. To make a Chinese meal without soy sauce is indeed impossible. The beans are fermented in great jars or tubs, then strained and aged and salted. The resulting rich, wine-brown, clear, pungent liquid forms the basis of most Chinese dishes. There are connoisseurs of *sho yu* or *jang yu*, those who can tell, by sniffing at the open bottle dangling by its string above the kitchen stove, just where it was made, with what water, how long fermented, how salted. Nearer to our Worcestershire sauce than to any other Western condiment, it is not really like that at all. It is not a combination of spices; it has a smooth body and a flavour all its own.

What is gravy without its seasoning of soy sauce, and how is meat turned to its perfect brownness without a few drops from the bottle? How insipid is fish unless it has the perfect combination of sweet and sour and salt! The cold delicacies of the first courses of a feast—seaweed, shrimps, mussels, water-chestnuts—how impossible to enjoy them unless they are served with a small individual dish of soy sauce, mixed with a dash of vinegar—Chinese vinegar—and a trickle of the finest peanut oil, in which each bite may be dipped before it is lifted to the lips! No less impossible the next rounds of courses unless each has its dash of sauce—some more, some less, with always more in the little dish beside one that can be added for the sake of individual taste!

When a farmer returns at dusk to his mud-walled house, with his freshly filled sauce-bottle dangling from his girdle, he brings the heart of his wife's cooking for the week.

When one sits down to a Chinese meal here in this country and asks for soy sauce and is told there is none, just as if it did not matter, the meal has lost the last resemblance it might have had to authenticity.

The soy-bean is the wonder bean of the world, and yet were one to ask why and wherein lies its greatness it would not be, I think, its use in paints or varnishes or diets or cereals or plastics, because all these can be made from other things and it is only substituting here; but it would



THE FARMER RETURNS AT DUSK

Wonder Bean

be its use as flavour for the food of the four hundred millions of China, and for the many more millions in Japan and the Indies and the islands of the seas. For one may use a substitute for a substance, or a chemical, or even a vitamin—but for a flavour there is no substitute. It is there or it is not.



“ OPEN SESAME ”

Ink

FROM his hiding-place Ali Baba saw that the robber chief was able to open the door into solid rock, disclosing untold riches within the secret cave, by using the magic words, “ Open Sesame ! ” Magic rarely gives reason for itself, and yet perhaps it could be argued that there was reason for the robber chief to use the word ‘ sesame ’ in token of unexplained power.

The plant *Sesamum indicum* is an annual which has been cultivated for its seeds in India and China for many thousands of years. The small oval seeds, rich in oil, are one of the commonest sights in China to-day. They decorate the long, flat loaves of the North, the round, sweet cakes of the South, and add a pleasant nutty flavour to sweets made of malt. These come in sticks resembling toffee, tiny match-sticks, or paper-thin sheets delectable even to the Westerner.

Visit a friend on New Year’s Day and tea is no longer simple green tea brewed in the cup, but a creation. In the cup are placed a pinch of brown sugar, a dried chrysanthemum flower, a shred or two of candied greengage, tea-leaves, of course, and last of all a teaspoonful of roasted sesame seed. When the bubbling water is poured on and the cup lifted to one’s lips and one’s nose as well, as is inevitable, the aroma is a mixed fragrance—acrid tea, astringent gage, spiced chrysanthemum, and the

“Open Sesame”

rich nuttiness of the sesame which, heavy with oil, dissolves in the hot liquid and permeates it. When the brew is slowly sipped off, there remains in the bottom of the cup a good bite or two of a delightful and indescribable mixture.

Every hostess has her own secret concoction, and surprise always awaits one when the last drop is drunk.

It is a thing of beauty, too, this cup of holiday tea. The small dried-flowers unfold and float like minute water-lilies. The greengage hangs midway with a shimmering greenness. The seeds lie like sand in the bottom, awaiting discovery. Ever the guests examine the results of the exploration, and ever they exclaim at what they find, certain that it was just the right proportion of that or this that made the drink ambrosial.

But there is a greater magic than this in *Sesamum indicum*. More than a thousand years ago paintings were brushed which are still beautiful to-day. Poems were written, records set down, all standing clear to the eye even now. The ink that was used was imperishable. To-day we call it Indian ink, and we use it for fine pen-work, lasting records, and the making of maps. The best Indian ink was made in those early days just as it is made now—from the soot of sesamum oil mixed with glue made from animal hides.

Going to an ink shop in China is not at all like buying a bottle of ink at a stationer's. To purchase ink in China is to be served first with a cup of tea and a cigarette by a small apprentice. He comes running from the back of the shop at a shout from the clerk or master, who sits on a high stool behind the polished counter. While one sips politely one is asked of one's sons, of the weather, of one's business, and at long last of the type of ink one prefers. Does the customer want the best; very hard, fragrant, embossed, perhaps—surely—with one's honourable surname and so necessarily made to order? Not the finest? Then, if it is to be what is already made, the master turns to take some samples, each wrapped in soft, fibrous paper, from a shelf. There are mighty sticks which it takes two hands to wield on the ink slab, these for writing scrolls; thin ones, tiny ones, each decorated in its moulding—some with bamboo, some with dragons, some smooth black, some with touches of red or gilt. There are different qualities and different prices.

The ink is chosen, and then there is, of course, the matter of an ink slab if the old one has worn a bit rough with using. There is one for the scholar—medium-large, with an indenture at one end for the water

黑墨行



THE INK IS CHOSEN

“Open Sesame”

and a smooth space enclosed by a rim for the ink as it gathers from the slow mixing of the water and the ink stick. There is a simple one for school children—quite rough and crude. There is one for the average writer. Then there is an especially fine one for the shaping of the brush point, its surface extra smooth, its edge rolled to a turn.

And the brush? This is important, for the brush and the ink must be one. A dozen lie before one, each carefully guarded by a brass cap which fits over it like the snuffer on a candle. A cap is taken from one and the brush carefully examined in the light—finest camel-hair, pointed to perfection. Already in one's imagination one feels the pleasure of toning the brush in the ink—ink not watery but with the suggestion of viscosity, shiny black, permanent. A little twist and then a stroking, drawing motion combined with a turn and the brush is ready to be set to the waiting paper.

So with romance has ink interpreted China through the writings of her poets and sages, and through the paintings of her masters. When the mind was ready the hand prepared itself and expressed the feeling of the heart in terms unalterable. Is it a wonder that writing and painting were to be for ever allied in China? Does it stretch the point to say that the creation of Chinese ink was indeed the “open-sesame” to the riches of Chinese thought?

The Arabian Nights, tales compounded through the ages by the combination of stories of different origins—Persian and Indian and Chinese—centred in a region where the sesame seed grew. They are tales of magic and romance and excitement, told supposedly by a wife who in this way staved off the hand of her Bluebeard husband. Most magic and most romantic of all was the little seed that had so much to do with the recording of the tales and the lore of the people of the East.



GIANT GRASS

Bamboo

THE beauty of bamboos is ever something fugitive, suggested rather than actual, atmospheric rather than real. A green mist shrouding an old red temple; green lacework as background for an arched bridge; shiny, green, jointed trunks intervening between oneself and the near view of a pond about whose edges lotus grow, and in whose waters lazy ducks guzzle happily—these are bamboos.

For bamboos are like poetry. They do not state fact, but they express meanings and feelings and implications. They may seem stark and strong, their glossy trunks often nearly three feet in circumference—then again some are smaller than one's little finger—standing perfectly upright, unsoftened by outbranchings until far above the reach of man. The shade beneath them is black and broken by only the sparsest flickering of sunlight, which, making its way through the masses of tiny pointed leaves, pierces the shadow with spotlight clearness. The floor of the grove is not even softened by tiny shade plants or ferns or mosses, for the bamboo leaves—which fall all through the year because it is an evergreen—form a clean carpet that smothers every other growing thing. The trunks usually grow close together, in season making their appearance above the ground as pointed shoots that pierce the soil and

Giant Grass

rise with myth-like rapidity, some as much as a foot or two in a single night. Not even a thief can find a hiding-place in a bamboo grove, without undergrowth or out-branchings low enough to hide him, unless, agile as a monkey, he manages to clamber up between two stems growing a knee-spread apart.

Again, nothing can be less stark than a grove of bamboos. Against a mountain-side they are like mighty ferns caressing the slope, swaying one way or another with a flowing motion in the wind, or standing perfectly still, blue-green in their shadows, near golden when the sunlight strikes them. The very sight of them to the traveller means that he is coming not to acrid, rocky country, but to lush foothills, low valleys, kindly places of gentle breezes and heavy fogs and warm rains.

And bamboos and snow! Bending and swaying, the snow lying in ledges and drifts and pannicles against the living green—summer and winter combined and perfecting the beauty of both! Perhaps the Chinese have perceived best of all this strange combination of Nature. It is a favourite theme with them, enticing them because of its contrasts of dark with light, grace with heaviness; and even more with its contrasts of feeling—airy summer and shivering winter, symbolic of so much that touches the heart. . . . A heavy trunk, ivory-smooth, a few branches, one or two with their sprigs of dainty leaves, each holding its capacity of snow, each casting its ebony shadow on the glistening ground beneath—that is the picture done in black and white and dedicated by a line of poetry to man or sage or mountain.

But bamboos, although poetic in spite of themselves, are one of the most mundanely useful of all plants. Perhaps only the soy-bean can surpass them. In the Han dynasty a Chinese envoy to the countries lying to the west, Chang Ch'ien (126 B.C.), found bamboos growing in Bactria and believed them to have come from the provinces Yunnan and Szechuen, although some said they had come in through the region of Burma. However that may be, they are indigenous to both India and China, and it is in China that they have been most thoroughly adapted to a thousand uses and have been an inspiration to artists.

There are nearly five hundred species of bamboo, which are themselves a subdivision of the grass family. Large varieties of bamboo may grow as high as one hundred and twenty feet with perhaps a hundred stems to a single plant. These stems are hollow, and are intercepted by a natural partition only at the joints. Water-pipes for irrigation are often made of large stems, the joint partitions being removed to make a duct,



THE FISHERMAN LIFTS HIS CROSSED BAMBOO POLES

Giant Grass

and the stems joined to one another by fitting the tapering end of one stem into the large end of the next. Sturdy stems are used where strong posts are needed to support houses and bridges. They are made into ships' masts. Split into strips they form planks that can be used for floors and sides of houses. The wood of this giant grass is tough and strong and can be cut into fine strips which are woven into cables for barges and rafts and even junks. Sails are often woven of split bamboo.

Baskets strong enough to transport coal, rice, or wheat, or coated with heavy paper and made into containers for various kinds of oil; chairs fashioned from twisted and bent pieces, either as sedans for carrying men up the steep sides of mountains or for use in the home; screens for the shading of courts and doorways; mats on which to dry grains and salted vegetables; cradles, beds, stands—these and many more are the common uses of bamboo.

The fisherman along the river lifts his two crossed bamboo poles from which is suspended his great drop-net, a moment before submerged, and reaches down into its lowest point of sag with a long, bamboo-handled bag net to scoop out the wriggling, gleaming fish and drop them into bottle-necked oval baskets which stand in shallow water near his fishing-hut. All three of his utensils are made of bamboo, and the very shelter in which he sits is supported by bamboo, woven of bamboo. His stool is bamboo and the large hat that he wears is bamboo-framed and matted with reed leaves.

Baskets, although intended for utility, come near the point of artistry. There are enormous flat ones, deep round ones, small ones with lids topped by tiny lacy knobs, oval ones, long hexagonal ones, kidney-bottomed ones, solid-weave ones, open-weave ones—some very sturdy and strong and some made of strips so flexible that they are as delicate as lace.

Here is a shop that sells only articles of bamboo—vases of a single section, their bottoms formed by nature and their sides carved in dragons or peonies, hard and aged, they seem more bone than wood. One is reminded of the fact that bamboo was the stuff of books in ancient China—imperishable books of which a single volume almost filled a house.

Here is a chopstick shop—bone and ivory and silver, but, most of all, bamboo chopsticks by the thousands. They may be bought for a copper or two or for much more, depending upon the aging of the

Bamboo

wood, the inscription written near the handle ends, the decoration, and the polish.

Here is a fan shop. How old fans are! Nearly two thousand years before Christ the Chinese were using them. The earliest ones were large leaves of trees—palm-leaf fans are the commonest of all even yet—and then man copied from the trees and made his own ribs for fans, of wood and ivory and silver. Folding fans were not made in Europe until the sixteenth century, but they had long been used in China by both men and women. Fans were taken to Europe from China probably in the time of the Crusades. It was then that they came to be part of individual equipment rather than a sign of regality as they had long been considered in the history of Egypt and Rome.

In China fans are part of summer dress. Men carry them thrust down the back of the collar where they can easily be drawn out and used in rhythmic motion while talk goes on. Women carry them in the hand or in the side-pocket of the gown or jacket to be used, too, when hands are free of children or of the many small polite services of a home. . . . There are fragrant fans of sandalwood, carved in intricate design, beauties with ribs of polished ivory and coverings of silk, bamboo and paper ones, long ones, a little heavy, for men for everyday use, small ones, delicate but sturdy, for women for daily use. But the sentiment written upon them must be chosen with care, and the scene painted across them must be right, flowers of a season in tune with the sentiment; birds and flowers and sentiment all in harmony.

There is the heavy smell of oil as the sun shines down. Dozens of umbrellas stand open before a shop. They are dry but they need to be sunned and aired when the day is clear. The frames are of bamboo, carefully split, polished, and joined to the sturdy bamboo handle. The ribs are delicate. The joining is clever, each rib fitting in its notch cut in the strongest part of the handle shaft, a spot just above a joint. Strong hemp cord or wire holds each rib in place. When the umbrella is closed the ribs all come together and are held there by a simple ring of lacquered cord. The oiled paper that covers the ribs cannot be seen now—folded inside—only the ribs, lacquered to match the handle, give a smooth, neat appearance. Rigid umbrellas for regal use are of very old origin in several parts of the world. Metal ones dating to the third century before Christ have been excavated in China, and folding umbrellas probably originated there.

Baskets, chopsticks, umbrellas, vases—each type of bamboo article

Giant Grass

has its own place of manufacture. Admittedly some are made in other places as well, but to have any one of such articles from its place of origin is to have the authentic thing.

Over there men are weighing a kapok-like material—bamboo shavings, used for filling mattresses and cushions. . . . Farther on, in a paper shop, there is an argument about a variety of paper. An old scholar has sent for some of particularly fine quality for the writing of a eulogy; his servant shouts that this is not it, for it must be bamboo paper, the kind made from the fine inner lining and softest pulp of the bamboo stems. “The Old Head will have nothing else!” he says.

Bamboo chopsticks, thrust deeply into a bowl with delectable rich gravy and meats, lift out a piece of bamboo shoot—but cooked crisp. It has a taste of its own, yet it has taken on the flavour of the meat and at the same time has given something of itself to the entire dish. Bamboo shoots are one of the commonest foods of China in the season when children may dart about the groves, sneaking away a few shoots at dusk, or when the markets sell them at low price. But in winter the ‘winter shoots’ imported from the south are a delicacy. Small, thin shoots may be served with only a flavouring of meat or with fish roe. The larger ones are cooked with pork or chicken, making the choicest bamboo dishes. It is not at all fair to judge the bamboo shoot by the soggy contents of the canned export, for the texture of the fresh shoot between the teeth has much to do with its flavour and this is entirely destroyed by the process of preserving.

Some varieties of bamboo blossom rarely. In the case of most varieties the seed is a grain, and the Chinese say that when the rice crop is poor, bamboo seed is more abundant. Yet the sight of blossoming bamboo is not common in China. But one may forget that the bamboo does not give plentiful blossoms, remembering all else that it does give—food and housing and material for arts and crafts, besides the fun produced by the paper artisan and described in the next chapter.



APER MAGIC

Celebrations

THE paper artisan is one of the most important men in Chinese life. He is always busy with the making of decorations for weddings or funerals, or for celebrations such as the opening days of new business houses. His trellises and arches, covered with gay flowers, may cover the entire face of a shop, or even be large enough to allow passage of a parade beneath them.

Yet the chief work of this artisan is mainly concerned with three great holidays. One of these, the Lantern Festival, is celebrated on the fifteenth day of the first moon which, in the Chinese calendar, is the night of the first full moon of the year. This festival is called the *shang yuan*, the first creative power, or the spring sun that comes to warm the earth and revive vegetation. Since it is a festival of light, lanterns characterize it. These are bamboo frames covered with thin paper and representing vegetables, fruits, animals, fish, and almost every other conceivable thing. Some have small figures so suspended as to revolve with the heat of the candle, illustrating ancient historical or religious fables. Many of these lanterns are extremely clever and intricate in their picturization.

The festival is celebrated by contests. The sun, returning from the south, meets the powers of opposition, and these contests are supposed to help it. Sometimes there are exhibitions of roosters, since the rooster

Paper Magic

announces the rising of the sun. Always the streets are crowded with people out for holiday fun, and some very ancient records tell of officials who petitioned for suppression of the orgies which took place. But nothing seems to have been able to suppress the effect of spring's return. Spring calls and the people, tired of dreary winter, are glad to help to bring back the blessings of the kinder season.

The Chinese All Souls' Day is the 'Festival of the Hungry Dead'. It begins on the fifteenth of the seventh moon and lasts for fifteen days. It is celebrated especially for the spirits of those who no longer have human relatives to care for them. Such spirits suffer from hunger and thirst unless some one thinks of them. If uncared for they begin to interfere maliciously with human affairs. Sometimes the spirit tablets of childless ghosts, the ancestral records that all possess, are collected in a special temple and a caretaker is hired to burn incense before them. In a sense they are pathetic—discoloured, crumbling, covered with dust, as if the spirits themselves hovered disconsolately round them.

Over a long period of time the 'Festival of the Hungry Dead' has been combined with a Buddhist festival, at which souls are released from hell for a whole month, and are free to enjoy the feasts prepared for them. The paper artisan must have ready imitations of houses, gardens, furniture, shoes, clothes, horses, sedan-chairs, and boats in which to bring the spirits across any intervening waters—in fact, everything a man would need. Offerings of real food are abundant. At the culmination of the ceremony all the paper gifts are burned in a magnificent blaze beneath the effigy of the Chief God of Hell or of the kind Goddess of Mercy. When burnt they are supposed to multiply in the other world. The names of the donors are written on strips of red paper and burned, too, so that the ghosts may know who their benefactors are. When the burning is over there is a stampede to the offered foods, and feasting with these and with other holiday dishes follows.

One other celebration of this festival which is particularly beautiful is that of the 'Lotus-flower lamps'. There are several parts to this. One is the burning of paper boats, complete with boatmen, for the purpose of sending to the spirit world those who may be of help to them. Another is the parade of children through the dark streets with lanterns in the shapes of lotus flowers, chanting, "Lotus-flower lamp! O Lotus-flower lamp! To-day we light our tapers, to-morrow you will be gone." Most beautiful is the launching of these tiny lanterns



THE WORK OF THE PAPER ARTISAN IS CONCERNED WITH HOLIDAYS

Paper Magic

on the water—sometimes no more than blocks of wood with candles—for the sake of the souls of those who have drowned. In *The Moon Year* Juliet Bredon and Igor Mitrophanow describe this ceremony in the Wind Box Gorge of the Yangtze river:

Lazily the frail glowing shapes drift out into the current. The gentle breeze and flowing stream scatter them widely apart, then drift them together again in the narrow gorge beyond. Each with its own quiver of flame, seems a soul afraid, trembling on a blind current, which bears it into outer darkness. Soon the lights burn themselves out. . . . Because it is not good to meddle with the lamps of the dead, not a single boat ventures upon the river, and the fishermen catch no fish on that day.

For all these feast days, and for the constant remembrance of the dead, the paper artisan has yet another important piece of work to do. This is to make paper money for sacrifice. Long ago, as far back as 200 B.C., rich people buried lumps of gold and silver in their graves to satisfy the greed of the gods. But this was too expensive a business for ordinary people, and after a time it came to be acceptable to burn imitation money on the theory that it became real in the spirit world. Two kinds of paper money developed. One was made in the shape of ingots and covered with gold or silver foil. The other was what was called 'paper horses.' These are sheets of paper about twelve by eighteen inches, stamped with pictures roughly resembling different gods.

'Paper horses' originated when actual animals were sacrificed at the grave. Later these became wooden effigies, then stuffed figures, and—in the time of the T'ang dynasty—paper effigies, chiefly of horses. The 'paper horses' of to-day are a survival of this custom, even though horses rarely form part of the picture. They are printed by the thousands on simple presses. Paper-money shops, with their strings of shining ingots and piles of 'paper horses,' are common on almost every village street.

The Festival of the Double Nine, on the ninth day of the ninth moon, is also largely dependent upon the work of the paper artisan. This is the festival when kites are flown. Bamboo, or reed and paper, shapes are made in almost every imaginable form with the greatest cunning.

There are two stories of the origin of kites. Although more connected with China than with any other country, and certainly of Asiatic origin, kites may have come first from the Maori tribes of New Zealand. They may have begun with a Chinese festival known as that of 'Mounting the Heights.' This took place in the autumn when the harvest was in

Celebrations

and men were free to maraud. Soldiers went to the mountains surrounding the towns to watch, and the kites were used as signals.

Although kite-flying was first used scientifically—by Han Hsin (196 B.C.) to learn how long he would have to make his tunnel in order to undermine the palace of the city he was besieging—it was later connected with the autumn festival, which in turn was connected with the going to the hills. This festival is connected with the frosts which come earlier to the valley than to the hills, and with the legend about a certain sorcerer and his warning to a friend. It seems that he foretold that on the ninth day of the ninth month a calamity would befall him. The friend took warning and with his family fled to the hills and so escaped the trouble that actually came, destroying all his animals.

But whatever its origin, kite-flying is part of the 'Festival of the Double Nine' celebrating the coming of winter. As an art it began in the seventh century.

On the day of the festival, in many districts, thousands of people gather on the hills. Special police are sent out to keep order because the rivalry may become so heated as to lead to fights. The festival kites are huge affairs which require several men to manipulate. Gentlemen of leisure club together and buy an enormous kite to compete with others of neighbouring groups. Guilds make and fly kites for their groups.

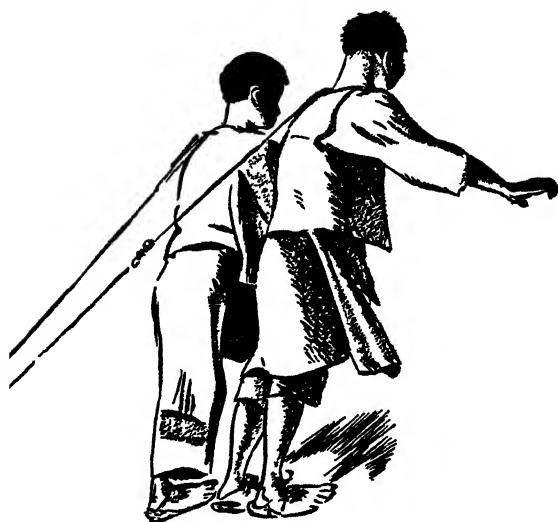
There are dragons, frogs, butterflies, centipedes, stars, and animals so cunningly devised that the wind, working various mechanisms, makes them roll their eyes, move their paws, or flutter their wings. They not only move but they make sounds as well, for tiny *Æolian* harps are sometimes attached, or whistles are fastened in such a way that air currents blow through them.

Here the Weavers' Guild has a tremendous goldfish eight feet long, with multiple tail and fins. They have trouble getting it to rise. There are laughs and curses and smart remarks. There, the Tinkers have their centipede. It is a good thirty feet long, and to raise it men stand on stools each supporting a section, waiting for the perfect breeze and ready to push at the fateful instant. It comes, and with a whooping and shouting the beast rises gracefully and undulatingly towards the sky. It is a sight—that. There is also a dragon with green rolling eyes. Mingling among these, from every grave-mound and hillock, are boys with their own private kites, dashing down, running, stopping, shouting, calling.* It is a day of sport. Some one has hooked down a rival kite.

Paper Magic

Another has cut one from the sky by the trick of glueing ground glass to his kite cord. The vanquished kite comes zigzagging to earth, a mass of paper and bamboo.

Then night comes. The crowd leaves, but a few people stay on. As darkness falls there is silence, and in the distance the faint singing of the kites and a glimmer of stars. The stars are lanterns on the kites—for a few bore them aloft as they went up—tiny paper lanterns that shine now. . . . Soon the kites themselves cannot be seen, and there are only the tiny bobbing stars and the Æolian music. Only the sky is real—it seems that even the Milky Way has run amuck and left its ordered path.



FREE CHINA BEGINS WITH HER BARE HANDS

China speaks

CENTURIES ago the Eastern Island People, the Japanese, sent an embassy to the great Chinese capital to learn the art of garden-making. They visited China many times as the ages passed. At first they came to learn the arts and culture and language of China. But after they had opened their doors to the West and had learned the art of Western warfare and the idea of Western domination, a dream was born to them. This dream was the dream of Asia for the Asiatics—and the Japanese were, it seemed to them, the ones appointed of the gods to make that dream come true.

Formosa, the Liu Chiu Islands, and Manchuria fell to them. Then came the attack on China itself; this was easy, for the Japanese were a people trained in warfare and brave with abandon, whose leaders were "heaven-directed." The Chinese are a peace-loving nation, and they feel that warfare, as a vocation, is ever beneath the level of decent men.

The Sino-Japanese war began with all the perfection of a well-ordered military machine. Shanghai fell; Nanking fell; Hankow

Free China begins with her Bare Hands

fell; Canton fell. The little 'yellow dwarfs' entered Chinese towns and villages and pillaged and destroyed and killed and took what they wanted.

China resisted. Not until her war became the war in which all the democratic peoples of the world took part did the Western world comprehend the extent of her resistance. Now those people know the truth—that China was the front line of the war in the East.

The people from the coasts moved inland. By thousands and tens of thousands they set out for the heart of China, leaving the captured cities and towns and rivers. Their resistance was not that of mechanized warfare but of bare hands—or at best, hands that held only antiquated guns, staves, or pitchforks—and of determined hearts. Places which the Japanese thought captured, the guerrillas took back again overnight. Fields from which the Japanese thought to draw crops yielded but a poor harvest. Cattle which the Japanese thought to slaughter for food, sickened and died in an unexplained manner. Puppets set up to carry on for the conquerors were unexpectedly inefficient.

And the people, with their little bundles of bedding and clothing and food, set out, by foot and rickshaw and cart and slow boat, for the rocky, mountainous western country of interior China. The capital moved from Nanking to Hankow, to Chungking, and here, on the invulnerable rocks, a great new city has risen—a city magnificent not in its oft-bombed architecture but because it could not be taken. The caves in the heart of the mountains hid the people when the planes came. And when they left the people emerged and life went on, the city of people unvanquished.

But the story of this Great Migration of China is a story of merchants and scholars and students and engineers and modern girls and old grandmothers and little children. It is the story of a migration of a civilization which determined to preserve itself for its own sake and for the sake of the world.

Perhaps a traveller on the dusty road leading over plateaux and dizzy heights of seemingly impregnable mountains is stopped by an old man in a dusty, tattered cotton robe. He is a teacher. His slender, dirty hand points to the road and then to a group of students sitting on the rocky bank of the trail. There, written in the dust, is a lesson in philosophy. It is that day's recitation period, and the college students have paused in their endless walking to rest and study.

The students are worn and strained, lean, with not enough to eat,



THE PEOPLE FROM THE COASTS MOVED INLAND

Free China begins with her Bare Hands

and brown with the beating sun, but they are eager, not only with the anxiety to learn, but with an inner light. They are on their way to Free China. They are to free all of China; to free the world from the horror that rose in Europe and in Japan and tried to fetter them and their brothers across the sea. They will start their college afresh in temples, in discarded guildhalls, in caves—wherever there is space.

Factories moved inland, piece by piece, and began again in separated units, in tiny villages, for there must be things to use, more and more of them, as ports closed and China was thrown back into herself.

Munition factories started in caves, or in holes in city walls. Guns were made in crude forges. There was the ring of anvils—low words spoken among the workers, curses.

Coolies, men and women, trudged mile after mile of road, carrying earth in bamboo baskets, hewing out rock a little at a time; there were no steam shovels, no cranes—only small yellow hands and bent backs stooping under the carrying-poles. The Burma Road extending to India was China's life-line. Two other roads, more fearful, leaping the mountains, burrowing beneath them, lead to the West. The roads were bombed. Rushing from their hiding-places, as if by magic, the people repaired them quickly in the dark of night. By morning the lines of American trucks, heaped high with goods and people, could push on again towards freedom.

A lorry overturns. It is a load of tung oil for export, part of a cargo destined for America. It must reach the coast. No one is hurt this time. Every one extricates himself and stands looking at the jumble of barrels, some leaking, and at the trickle of thick, yellow oil running into a narrow ravine. The driver says nothing. An old man, weary and ill, quavers, "There is no way."

The driver answers, his eye glinting, "There is a way." He leaps down and stands gazing at the trickle of good oil running away, joining with a tiny stream which gurgles among the rocks into the valley below. His lorry is one of a transportation co-operative of the Industrial Co-operatives. He is under their orders. He cannot fail, for they must not lose. . . . Every one is silent, overcome with distress. Night is coming on. They must wait here until it is day again. They can see no other way.

Voices come from the distance, echoing among the rocks. "Oil!"

The driver leaps down the ravine. The old man calls faintly, "Don't leave us! Bandits!"

China speaks

A white man curses roundly, "Nice mess to have got us into. What lorry could be expected to take a curve like this at that speed!"

A Chinese woman says, wondering, "How far to the night's stopping-place?"

No one answers, for no one knows. The driver has gone.

But from the valley the voices are louder. They seem to be growing nearer. The dusk has come, and the passengers peer down towards the rocks, trying to see. A crowd of people are coming, leaping up over the rocks. They carry old tin cans, bowls, bottles half filled with oil caught in the trickle. Now they are here, studying the position of the overturned lorry, arguing.

"'Twill take twenty men to right it. The oil will run away while we work. What is the pay?"

A woman among them says clearly, "I could have caught enough oil to oil the rain hats and the matting on which we dry our grain." Her face is unwilling. A blackened man nudges her and indicates the lorry. "This will be worth more," he seems to say. She says no more.

Then every bowl and tin can and bottle is set carefully away in a ledge or nook of the rocks, and the men range themselves to put all their strength to the truck. All the barrels must first be taken out. It is almost dark by the time they begin to right the truck itself. They heave in unison, grunting. The first time the wheels skid in the soft clay of the new-made road. A man's laugh breaks out, rasping and sharp. "*Tsai-lai*—at it again!" he says. Again, and failure. But the third time the lorry rights itself.

The men are merry, dusting their hands and spitting on them to soften the sharpness of half-imbedded sand. "*Ts'eng kung liao*! It's done!" roars one—the clown of the crowd—half leaping into the air.

"Pay us before the oil all runs away," another shouts quickly to the lorry-driver, and quickly the others gather round. They urge and threaten.

"Wine money," the driver says to pacify them, and adds more coins to each one. He has lit a cigarette, his hand steady and his eyes shining.

"Who are these people?" the white man asks.

"The people who have come to live beside the road, who mend it when it is broken," the driver answers. "They have made a little village down there and have their huts and garden patches."

The passengers clamber back into the truck. The headlights will not work, and it is pitch dark now. The voices of the returning villagers

Free China begins with her Bare Hands

echo resoundingly from among the rocks. The sound is all that is left of the noisy crowd of a few minutes ago.

"I have a torch," the white man says quietly. "Can you see if I hold it like this?" He holds it focused on the road, which leaps up a tremendous incline ending in a hairpin bend.

"I can see," the driver answers, without moving his head. "There is always a way," he adds. And then, suddenly, he is singing the fragment of a tune, something about, "Arise, Free Brothers, arise!"

When they reach the town a play is in progress on an improvised stage. There is no scenery, of course. There are not even costumes, for none are needed. It is not a fantastic play of another era. It is a drama of to-day, and the actors are playing their own parts and those of the people around them.

There is a family—father, mother, son, and daughter. The father is suspected of being helpful to an official who is a puppet of the Japanese. The two children conspire to kill their father as a patriotic duty. The mother discovers their plan, and, knowing that their crime would be greater than her own should she commit the murder—an unfilial act of the greatest magnitude—murders the father herself. Then she rushes to the front of the stage and, flinging up her arms, addresses the mothers of the audience, "Mothers, arise!"

The play is over and the singing begins. A young student leads it. His voice rings out clearly into the night as he sings the verse, to teach the others. He is not looking at them but out, above them, as if at a vision of the China that is to be. They join him the second time—people who have come from the long trail of the mountains and valleys—farmers, villagers, professors, students, doctors and engineers with western degrees, even a mother who slaps her baby's bare buttocks in rhythm to the tune. An old grandmother listens carefully and then she wipes her eyes. "Singing!" she murmurs. "They are even singing against the Japanese!" Her slender hand trembles a little with palsy as it rests on the top of her bamboo staff, "It strengthens the heart—much singing," she finishes to herself. Then she adds to her neighbours, 'It is not the singing of the monks in the temple, nor yet the singing of actors. . . . It is the singing of all people.'

The singing is over, and the crowd melts away. A great poster is left standing where all can see—an anti-Japanese poster. It is full of blood and hatred and anger. The people glance at it before they leave. A young boy studies it, and a muscle in his jaw twitches.

China speaks

A group of young women go to their barracks, which are long, mat-roofed buildings, empty except for bed boards on benches and plain wooden tables. At one end stand looms on which cotton cloth is being woven, the woof made on government spindles, the warp twisted on small hand spindles. It is unbleached or dark blue. Bolts of it stand stacked ready for shipment. A girl settles herself on the edge of her bed and takes from beneath her bedding a shoe which she is making from cloth stitched evenly with coarse thread. She stoops to see what she does in the dim light of a vegetable oil lamp, often pulling the needle through the thick layers of cloth with her strong white teeth. Her face is lean and sober, but her hands work steadily. There is not enough time in the day even to work at the looms for the Cloth Co-operative, let alone to make shoes and clothes for herself. One can see well enough at night to make shoes.

Another girl is standing by a loom, feeling the cloth.

"It is better than the first lot we made," she says. "I'm going to have my next dress of this sort of material. It is smoother and twice as wide since the loom was improved. It won't have to have a seam down the front and back." Her eyes shine with pleasure. "I always wore silk in Shanghai," she goes on, smiling, "but I'd rather have cotton in Free China, even if I have to weave it myself!" She turns away, humming beneath her breath. "*Gung ho*" seems to come often in her song, for it is a song of the Co-operatives and the words mean "work together."

There are several thousand of these Industrial Co-operatives scattered throughout Free China. During the war they were hidden in caves, in temples, in tiny villages. They are centred as much as possible near the sources of raw materials. They produce more than two hundred different kinds of goods. They were mobile so that they could be moved quickly and easily in case of danger. They are the dream of Mr Rewi Alley, who saw that to survive China must produce. More than a hundred thousand Chinese are members of them.

When Shanghai was lost a hundred and forty thousand factories, business houses, and producing centres were lost. When Nanking was taken the Great Migration began. Over thirty million refugees began to move westward. The seventy million originally living in Free China had to assimilate the refugees. It seemed an impossible situation. The people had to produce—refugees as well as citizens. Mr Alley convinced General Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang, and Madame Sun

Free China begins with her Bare Hands

Yat-sen became the honorary chairman of the Chinese Industrial Co-operatives. In the summer of 1939 the work began with the making of one million woollen blankets for the army. Before long they were making a quarter of a million pounds' worth of goods a month.

It takes only seven persons to start a co-operative. They may be blacksmiths, carpenters, spinners, weavers, laundrymen, mechanics, printers, soapmakers—just men or women who know a trade. They pool their resources and receive a certain grant from the central organization, repaying and reinvesting a certain percentage each month, and retaining the rest for living-expenses. Soon the loan is paid back, and the new co-operative is an independent, democratic, producing centre helping to win the war.

One may find engineers with university degrees designing bigger and better looms, drawing plans for improved spinning wheels, planning military equipment. Most of the workers are young and determined. War workers are trained to organize the groups. Most of these are girls from all over China. They wear green uniforms so that they will not easily be seen in the open fields over which they trudge. They know how to teach crafts. Some girls' co-operatives are making hospital gauze exclusively, beginning with the cotton from the fields and carrying the process through until the sterilized packages are packed carefully on the backs of coolies to be taken to the nearest hospital.

In Chengtu, in the upper reaches of the Yangtze river, are gathered eight of China's universities. One gazes at the faces of a group of young men students. They are creased with lines. Behind them is a march of more than a thousand miles. They own nothing but the clothes on their backs and a roll of bedding that has often been spread beneath the stars. Their skin is as brown as that of a coolie, and their once delicate hands are roughened and hardened. They have to work to go to school—not students' work, but coolies' work. They have a herd of goats. They tend them and milk them and sell the milk to a Red Cross tuberculosis sanatorium. They shear the goats and sell the wool to the blanket makers. They collect the manure for their vegetable gardens. Only a few months ago they would have starved rather than touch the manure pits. Now they laugh and work. They are going to finish college! There are more of them this year than last. They are helping China—the sick, the wool co-operatives, the food co-operatives, and themselves.

What is it that Free China was giving to the other democracies of the world in new terms, not ancient, not artistic, in the usual sense of the

China speaks

word? It is faith, hope, and a spirit of undying determination. It is a new demonstration of living together, with singing and drama and a new type of painting by her modern artists—war artists—only parts of her full expression. To China we are indebted for the beginning of man's expression of beauty. That is the old art of China. To China we are indebted for the robust appreciation of living, thinking, philosophy, and eating and drinking. To China we are indebted for the beginnings of medicine and printing and astronomy. To China we are indebted for the roots of democracy. And from these roots to-day springs a new growth. The mellowness and richness are still there, but they are expressed in fresh terms. Her songs are songs of victory. Her plays are plays of defeating the enemy. Her paintings are paintings of refugees and soldiers and guerrillas and cave-dwellings, of workers making the goods of living, and men and women and children digging the China earth to make the roads to freedom. The artistic soul of China has left its poetry and philosophical writings and brushed bamboo paintings and refined calligraphy to combine itself with the practical nature which is the other side of the Chinese mind. It had to be guided by this practical side until the war was over. But now, what will be the gift, the new gift of China, that will emerge?

Who can say? The Chinese nature is the same and will be the same, except that, because of what it will have gone through, it will have learned a way of combining the past with the present and future. It will have come near death and so be able to live more fully.

It is this the world waits for—speaking in terms of art—the gift of a new China, an interpretation of a new life through the experience of a majestic, unbroken past, in the light of an impending and even more majestic future.

The men of the West fell in love with the beauty of China when first they beheld it, and they are in love with it still. Pottery, sculpture, painting, poetry, and philosophy all spoke, and the men of the West heard the sound but could not fully comprehend it. For China was speaking of the wisdom of life, and no other people had lived long enough, or were philosophical enough, or imperishable enough, or brave enough to be able to accept it—had they understood. For to men of the West bravery was ever the bravery of conquest and victory by the sword and by machines which their brains conceived and their hands learned to make. To be defeated was to these to perish from the

Free China begins with her Bare Hands

earth. Philosophy was to them the hope of a way of meeting life rather than the ripe result of life already lived for generations.

Thus men of the West saw the satin-smoothness of a T'ang vase, and loved it; studied the fine brush strokes of a painting and wondered at it; tried to grasp the meaning of a phrase of poetry in order to know the heart of China.

Now China finds a new expression that the West can understand. For its terms are revolution against tyranny of the white man, expulsion of the invader; its means are armies and guerrillas and planes; and its spirit is the spirit of hatred. China speaks now in terms understandable to militarism and progress in their Western sense, but she scorns the speaking even while her voice is heard. For she knows with her age-old wisdom that though man may be forced to undertake that which is despicable in order not to be wiped from the barbarous earth, the enduring things are not to be won by the sword. To her the things that endure are the things of the soul.

The loud, rasping voice of China at war rang out as she rushed into battle, and the West, hearing it, rejoiced. Is not China one with her? But China, hidden in her inland mountains and caves and monasteries, knows that what the world hears now is not herself, but only the voice of her necessity. When this is past her true voice will speak again. Will what she has to say then be understood better than before? She wonders. For she will speak of beauty and morality and peace and democracy. She will condemn war and say quietly, as she has through many ages, "All under heaven are brothers."

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